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The University of Alberta
Counsellor-Family Interaction:
A Survey of Perceptions
of
Real and Ideal School Counsellor Roles

by

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A Thesis
Submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research
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of
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THE UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA

FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES AND RESEARCH

The undersigned certify that they have read, and recommend to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research, for acceptance, a thesis entitled Counsellor-Family Interaction - A Survey of Perceptions of Real and Ideal School Counsellor Roles submitted by Joan Branigan in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Educational Psychology.

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Abstract

A considerable body of literature advocates that school counsellors should work with families of students to help relieve educational problems. To assess the views of working counsellors, school principals and parents regarding the value of such an approach and the problems inherent in this mode of counselling in schools, a questionnaire survey was carried out. Responses from school counsellors, principals and parents regarding the comparative importance of counsellor activities showed that all three groups generally perceived individual personal counselling and consultation with teachers to have higher priority than interaction with families within the present system. Ideally, however, school counsellors felt interaction with families should be increased from 10% to 35% of their time. Existing barriers to increased interaction were seen to be a heavy demand on counsellor time, and reticence by some parents to participate. The responses also suggested that many parents were unfamiliar with the role of the school counsellor, although the question of whether parents were unwilling to interact with counsellors or were indifferent, feeling little need for such assistance was not answered.

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Chapter 1

Introduction and Rationale

Adequate and concise answers to questions about the role of the school counsellor remain inconclusive despite the large number of studies and articles which have appeared during the past decade (Canadian School Trustees Association, 1980, Fitzsimmons, 1978, Zingle & Merchant, 1977). More are presently being undertaken (Alberta Department of Education, Canadian Guidance & Counselling Association). In general terms it is probably fair to say that the counsellor is in the school to provide education and assistance to the student in the area of emotional and affective development and to provide extra services for the child with emotional and behavioral problems which are interfering with his ability to learn. Zingle and Van Hesteren (1977) have suggested that counsellor function should be "tied to helping individuals to develop positive identities and the life skills required to cope with the demands and complexities of modern society" (p.109).

Ways and means of accomplishing these goals, however, remain controversial. The inclusion of work with parents and families of students into more traditional counselling roles has been increasingly mentioned as one way to more effectively reach educational goals (Friesen, 1976, Van Hesteren, 1979, Boyd, 1974, Christensen, 1975). John Friesen (1976) cites family counselling as a new challenge for school counsellors and other writers (Hiljman & Carlson, 1975, Gordon, 1975, Dreikurs, 1959) strongly propose greater involvement with parents through consultation and through parent education.

Many reasons have been cited to support these proposals.

Many of these come from the literature describing the family as a system in which emotional disturbances seen in the child are considered symptomatic of unhealthy family interaction patterns (Friesen, 1976). Dinkmeyer & Carlson (1973) state that "all problems of children are problems of a disturbed parent-child relationship . . . and . . . to work with one party alone is almost a handicap" (p.296). Family systems theory states that disturbed children are frequently "scapegoats" in the dysfunctional family, serving as an alternative focus for parental communication to release some of the pressures created by marital discord (Gilmore, 1974). This being the case, any effective remediation with the child will disturb the family equilibrium which will, in turn, necessitate family pressure on the child to revert to former behavioral patterns. Effects of individual counselling will therefore be consistently negated. Rosborough (1970) states that any counsellor "good enough to modify behavior in a client must be responsible enough to see that the new behavior is acceptable within the family situation" (p.220).

The family is also described as the foundation for the development of self concept and identity and for learning about emotional and social relationships (Dinkmeyer & Carlson, 1972). These are areas which, if problematic, are generally accepted as within the realm of the school counsellor.

Ackerman (1958) states,

> It is within the family that the personal identity of the individual is first formed. As the individual grows and differentiates his separate being within the matrix of his childhood family experience, he gradually establishes his personal identity. The psychic centre of gravity for the individual is this identity and a corresponding set of standards, strivings and values. (p.334)

But all too often the child is an inseparable extension of the parents' own feelings of self worth (Satir, 1964). If parental models are functioning inadequately in these

respects, individual counselling to improve self concept may prove to be of limited success.

In addition, the majority of parents have not received any training or education related to parenting roles, other than that gained from observing their own parents (Agati & Iovino, 1974, Gordon, 1970). Traditional models for parenting, however, have been heavily criticized by professionals as being inadequate in the less authoritarian modern world and parents are often confused, vacillating between extremes as the traditional models prove to be ineffective (LeMasters, 1974, Gordon, 1970).

Though there is growing awareness that family communication patterns are often causal to student problems, other writers caution that the "structure of the school and the organizational definition of school psychological services impose harsh limits on both educational and counselling models" (Gilmore, 1974, p.171). Local school officials argue that the extension of the school into community and family issues must stop somewhere and that family counselling is well beyond the capacity of educational institutions (Nichols, Note 1).

Others argue against the conclusion that parental or family counselling is a more effective approach than traditional school counselling interventions.

> However, while there is considerable agreement that inclusion of parents increases the liklihood of positive behavior change, there is little concensus regarding the extent and nature of the parent's role in the treatment process, and there is little research evidence to support the hypothesis that a more broadly based family approach improves the outcomes of counselling with children. (Ford & West 1979, p.102)

In this period of declining school enrollment, school based budgeting, and community school development, school counsellors will be further challenged to demonstrate their relevance to the goals of education. School trustees

and the general public remain unconvinced that counselling services are a viable solution to the issues and dilemmas of modern education (Dinkmeyer, 1973) and research in the field has not supplied convincing proof to challenge this view, (Boyle, 1971).

> Confronted by statistics which depict the widespread failure of large numbers of students at all levels of the educational process, and the large number of unemployed graduates of high schools and universities, counsellors are being asked "How are student services meeting the real needs of society?" (Dinkmeyer, 1973, p.52)

The need to respond convincingly to these questions is self evident. It seems logical that counsellors must be increasingly prepared to play an active role in the raising of questions about counsellor function, the administration of research, continuing public relations work, and decision making about the role of the school counsellor. This study is intended to be a small contribution to this process.

The Questions

The degree to which counsellors can and do work with parents and families of students is affected by numerous and complex variables. A very important variable is the perceived value of such an approach. Working counsellors can be assumed to be more aware than most other professionals of the kinds of problems and issues with which they deal on a day to day basis, and the types of approaches and solutions which appear to be most effective. Obtaining their views as well as the opinions of the parents of the students and the principals in charge of the schools is vital to increasing our understanding of this question. Changing the quantity and the nature of the interaction between counsellors and families will depend to a large degree on the views of these three groups.

To evaluate counsellor interaction with families, it is important to know to what degree there is involvement

occurring presently within the school system. Boyle (1971) wrote that, at that time, counsellors in one major school system spent one half hour per week assisting parents. Has this increased during the past nine years as the professional literature in this area might suggest?

How do counsellors view the importance of working with families in comparison to the other functions they perform in a school setting? Within the Edmonton Public School system counsellors are expected to do some needs assessment in each school (Carstensen, Note 2) and the way in which counsellor time is apportioned might be expected to reflect the needs of the students as perceived by the school counsellor. Do counsellors see a need for changing the amount of interaction between themselves and the parents or families of students? If there is a perceived need for change, are there limitations in the school system which restrict or prevent such a change from being consolidated? What would counsellors perceive as an ideal role for them in the schools were any restrictions to be removed? What are the barriers which exist?

If it is desirable for counsellors to change the amount of their interaction with families, it must also be questioned whether this change is possible or practical from a variety of viewpoints. Parents must see value in such interaction and be willing to participate. Rosborough (1970) expresses a parent's point of view stating,

> Parents generally find the same faults with the existing services as do counsellors themselves. They see a need for more and better counsellors, especially at the elementary school level. They worry about the lack of effectiveness in personal counselling and about the accuracy of vocational guidance. Most would like the help of trained counsellors in raising their children in order to prevent serious problems. It also becomes obvious that the public has had very little opportunity to find out about the current functions or philosophy of school counsellors. The image they have of counselling causes them to react

with fear, resentment and disinterest.
(Rosborough 1970, p.215)

A common perception held by many school personnel holds that it is primarily parents whose children are without major problems who will participate in interaction with school staff. Hillman and Carlson (1975) point out that some parents, discouraged because their child is experiencing difficulties, fear the judgment of the school counsellor and other school professionals and may cover their feelings of defeat by avoiding communication and blaming the school for the child's problems.

It is important to know how parents view the role of the present school counsellor, to assess parents' awareness of counsellor functions and services and to learn what parents perceive to be important with respect to the responsibilities of the counsellor. Aspects of family life such as the increasing numbers of single parents, and the trend towards both parents being engaged in full time employment must be considered variables which will affect the degree of interaction which is possible and desirable.

The school counsellor as a member of a school staff and an employee of a larger school system is accountable to his employers and to school administrations. Zingle & Merchant (1977) found that principals and teachers were in favour of more traditional roles for counsellors than counsellors were themselves. As principals hold the position of authority in the individual school, it would seem important to learn their attitudes towards counsellor interaction with families and assess the influence that principals wield in respect to counsellor function.

These types of questions formed the basis for this inquiry which was carried out in Edmonton schools and homes and is described below. Many areas of consideration have been omitted in this inquiry. In particular, the whole question of a developmental or preventive focus versus a remedial or crisis intervention focus,which has formed a major part of

the counsellor function literature, has been largely neglected. It can be reasoned that counsellor interaction with families can be looked upon as being either remedial or preventive or both (Friesen 1976). The rationale for increased counsellor family interaction admittedly has been stimululated by writers with a remedial focus. In this writer's view, however, supporting and educating parents and families has a strong prognosis for preventing emotional disturbances and improving affective development.

The question of whether schools should be playing a major role in strengthening families is another major question. This is touched on in part in this study, insofar as attitudes of parents, counsellors and principals to this question have been probed. The larger practical and political concerns have been omitted for purposes of this study.

Organization of Chapters

The following chapters outline in detail the inquiry carried out into the perceptions of school counsellors, parents and principals regarding school counsellor-family interaction. Chapter II summarizes the current professional literature pertaining to this issue. This includes a discussion of definitional problems, theoretical positions of writers relative to this issue and reports of specific programs. Chapter III describes the method of the inquiry and the analysis of data. Chapter IV summarizes the findings of the research and Chapter V presents the conclusions which can be made.

Chapter II

Review of Relevant Literature

Definitional Problems

In the literature on counsellor-family interaction, many terms have been used interchangeably with resulting confusion. Terms such as "therapy", "counselling", "consultation", and "parent education" are often inadequately defined, and what one writer describes as consulting appears similar if not identical to what the next writer defines as counselling. The attempts to define these terms reflect some of this uncertainty.

Christensen (1973) writes that

> the assumption that undergirds parent and family counselling in the school setting is that counselling is an educational rather than a medical pursuit ---and that lack of knowledge, information or experience, rather than illness is the basis of maladaptive behavior. (p.226)

Gilmore (1974) on the other hand differentiates between two models of interaction between parents and school psychologists, these being the educational model and the counselling model. His use of these terms would bring "counselling" closer to the medical or "therapy" definition.

Gilmore further suggests that an alternative model to education or counselling for categorizing counsellor-parent interaction is that of consulting which he describes as the typical style with which professionals interact with each other. His use of the term consulting states that parents are neither clients nor students, but consultees seeking advice in the use of problem solving behavior with their child.

Brown and Brown (1975) differentiate between counselling

which involves working with the child and consulting which they define as "a process engaged in by a counsellor and a parent for the benefit of the child" (p.95). Chisan (1973) in contrast states that "perhaps the counsellor should limit himself to consulting with the child and the counselling of teachers and parents" (p.215). Faust (1968) looked upon consultation as a process of collecting data to increase the counsellor's knowledge of the child, and interpretation of the child to the parent in order to bring about limited remedial measures in the parent-child relationship. Boyd (1973) describes consulting as an information-based procedure, while counselling is said to be relationship-based.

The use of the word consulting generally defines a process which can be assumed to be of relatively short duration, educational in nature and oriented to a third person, the child in this case, who is external to the consultation setting. In the consultative process, the emphasis is on the cognitive aspects of the parent child relationship although the emotional content may be close to the surface (Boyd 1974).

Whether counselling follows an educational or therapeutic model is not so easily defined. Gilmore (1974) writes,

> The school psychologist who adapts the counselling model assumes that many problems are, at least in part, the consequences of inadequate psychological functioning of the parents. (His) techniques---will facilitate communication, the uncovering of hidden affect states, insight into the source of the problem and appropriate remediation. (p.171)

While the therapy model of counselling as outlined by Gilmore is often considered inappropriate for school settings, the term counselling is more often used by others to describe an educational model which, it is argued, can be justifiably part of the school counselling program (Christensen, 1973). For the purposes of this inquiry

counselling will be viewed as primarily educational in nature, as fitting the roles of the school counsellor, keeping in mind that the counselling process when effectively carried out, may use techniques more often considered part of therapy. As Boyd (1974) states, "While provision for information activities may be required to promote parent self-exploration, it is the self-exploration, not the information giving which is the primary focus of the counselling relationship" (p.309).

Dinkmeyer & Carlson (1977) state that "any program of consulting, counselling or remediation . . . must contain mechanisms for bringing about changes in the family relationships" (p.219). Ivey (1977) writes that counsellors have found that an interview is insufficient to facilitate change in behavioral patterns for more effective family life. In line with this view, counselling as opposed to consulting, will be considered in this report to be more intensive and of longer duration, permitting the counsellor to interact with a family over a period of time in which change may be occurring as a result of the educational process. Counselling may include the student or all family members or only the parent members of the family in interaction with the counsellor. The relationship with the counsellor and affective components of the interaction are considered to be important.

Brown and Brown (1975) distinguish between counselling and consultation and parent education on the basis of process and content, stating that parent education follows a set agenda or curriculum and is more traditionally pedagogical. Parent education is most often carried out in the group format, but parent groups need not be restricted to structured pedagogical methods. They may be true counselling groups, emphasizing the parent as a "whole" person, and employing the use of group mechanisms and dynamic processes as in a therapeutic group (Dinkmeyer & Carlson 1975).

Theory and Method

The literature on counsellor-family interaction can be categorized as follows. First, there are numerous articles supporting th merits of counsellor-family involvement as a legitimate and effective approach to dealing with educational problems. Second, many articles propose one or another psychological orientation, such as family systems theory or Adlerian psychology. Third, the results of many studies on counsellor function have included references to counsellor interaction with families. Evaluative reports of specific programs which have brought counsellors and families together for educational purposes constitute a fourth area.

Brown and Brown (1975) propose four reasons for working with parents which include (1) the great number of children with problems and the concurrent need to develop resources to deal with these problems; (2) the need for all mental health groups to focus on prevention rather than remediation; (3) increasing evidence that for behavioral change to occur, we often must work in the natural environment of the child; and (4) evidence that interventions with parents can lead to significant changes in children, (p.96). They support the contention that large numbers of behaviorally disturbed children need help from results of their earlier study in which teachers were asked to indicate the number of students they would refer to an elementary school counsellor in a hypothetical situation of unlimited and comprehensive counselling services. The study reported that 40% of children were chosen for referral.

Boyd (1974) supports counsellor-family involvement by stating that parents want and need further information about the academic expectations of the school, the life style and social atmosphere of the peer group and developmental changes throughout childhood. Meeting these needs can assist parents to modify inappropriate expectations and promote more

positive interaction within the family. Gilmore (1974) says that parental contact may be necessary and helpful in diagnosis of problems and parental permission may be required for certain remedial techniques. Gordon (1975) argues for helping parents to improve communication styles as he states, "nine out of ten adults talk to children and youth in ways that are destructive to both the kids and the relationship" (p.268).

Family Systems Theory, as mentioned above lends a complex and pervasive rationale to the question of counsellor-family interaction. Particularly relevant to this question are systems concepts of family equilibrium and "scapegoating".

> In (the systems) point of view, the family is seen as a unit in which the parts have an order of relationship among them. Thus, anything that affects one part affects any other part. It follows that a change in one individual's behavior alone, apart from changes in the system, is unlikely to be lasting. The alternatives are for the individual to return to his status quo or for the system to be disrupted. (Sawatzky 1979, p.54)

In the event of effective counselling with a single family member, therefore, the equilibrium of the family may be disturbed to a varying degree. The student accepting counselling will likely be pressured to return to previous behavior patterns unless the family as a whole is aware and involved in the counselling process.

According to family systems theory, behavioral disturbances in a child may serve an adaptive function in maintaining the family balance.

> Parents experiencing conflicts within their marriage may use their children as go-betweens, as levers to increase their power position against their mate, as excuses for remaining married, or in any of a multitude of ways to solidify their own position within their marriage and to validate their own view of their married world. (Boyd 1974, p.310)

While ways in which the child may react to such forces are

highly individual, the child, as scapegoat for his family, often manifests the resulting disturbances through behavioral problems and/or lack of achievement in school. Boyd states that developmental changes in the child can often intensify these problems because families who are struggling to maintain a precarious balance in their family system cannot risk normal developmental changes in one of their members.

A central tenet of the systems approach is that a successful marital relationship is critical to the adjustment of children in the family (Sawatzky 1979). Difficult decisions, therefore, are required when school counsellors are faced with family related student problems which appear to have their source in a discordant marriage. Boyd states that parents who meet with the school counsellor in order to discuss student problems may frequently reveal their own personal or marital problems. Decisions regarding the appropriateness and opportunity for referral and where to "draw the line" in dealing with these issues may be complex.

The competency of many school counsellors in dealing with these questions has been queried as well. Friesen (1976) states that most school counsellors have the skill and knowledge to lead parent discussion groups, act as consultants on behavioral problems and child development, and understand family and group dynamics. He argues, however, that family and multiple family therapy should only be done by those whose training is at the doctoral level.

Adlerian Proponents of Adlerian psychology work around the question of counselling with marital problems by advocating an approach to be used primarily "where there exists a reasonable degree of stability in the home and where parents have the capacity to tune in to the needs of the family as a whole" (Van Hesteren, 1979, p.77). For this and other reasons, Adlerian counselling has been used extensively by school counsellors in their work with families. Van Hesteren states that

> the Adlerian-Dreikurs approach is one of the single most appropriate and useful in terms of working with families in schools. Although the approach is anchored in a specific approach to psychotherapy it is not particularly liable to the possibility of misapplication when tailored to the school setting. (1979, p.75)

Van Hesteren cautions against using therapy models (such as systems theory) inappropriately in schools and supports arguments that family counselling should emphasize the educational function of counselling.

The focus in the Adlerian system is on "teaching parents more effective techniques (of parenting) and assisting children to be more aware of the purposes of their misbehaviour" (Dinkmeyer & Carlson, 1973, p.205). It is said to be non-threatening to parents, relevant to both parents and teachers and to be both efficient and credible (Van Hesteren 1979).

The Adlerian family counselling model as developed by Christensen includes the following components:

1. initial gathering of pertinent family background data;
2. explanation of family counselling model, making it clear the model is educational and not therapeutic in nature;
3. gathering data concerning the family constellation, and making educated guesses concerning the characteristics of the children to establish credibility;
4. parental statement of the problem;
5. examining the behavior that takes place during a typical day in the life of the family;
6. identifying the possible goals of the children's misbehaviour;
7. interviewing the children to examine specific behavior and to confirm or reject hypotheses;
8. making recommendations to parents;
9. termination with commitment to follow through on plans for improvement (Van Hesteren, 1979).

The components may be carried out with individual families or in a group format which serves to accentuate the Adlerian importance of the socialization process as it involves families (Dinkmeyer & Carlson, 1973).

Behavioral and Other Approaches

Becker (1971) writes that clinical psychologists, counsellors and teachers have taught groups of parents of children exhibiting behavior problems the use of behavioral techniques. He states that,

> the most common report given to us from parents is that the program helps them to become more positive and loving in interacting with their children. Shouting, yelling and griping are replaced by clear instructions and positive consequences (p.2).

Csapo and Friesen (1979) write that when parents are under stress, reinforcement for child behaviors may be subject to "the immediate whims and fancies of an indulging or neglectful adult" (p.68) instead of according to a systematic program. Van Hesteren (1979) reports that parents whose personalities tend to be authoritarian may be more susceptible to the principles of a behavior modification program.

Ryan and Fletcher describe the advantages of parents becoming involved in career guidance programs in the schools by serving as resources and knowledgeably assisting the student in planning courses and further education. They also maintain that inclusion of parents in career guidance programs is conducive to positive public relationships and keeping counsellor budget allocations a priority.

Counsellor Function Studies

A number of studies have looked into present school counsellor functions and the perceptions of various groups such as the general public, parents and professionals of counsellor roles. Merchant & Zingle (1977) studied counsellor functions in elementary schools in Canadian urban areas. They found that elementary school guidance and counselling

programs have increased rapidly in Canadian schools. Of counsellors studied, 77% had an undergraduate degree and 33% had a graduate degree. Sixty-two percent had earned a guidance diploma, although 10% had no formal preparation in the counselling field. They reported that two thirds of counsellors had experienced a supervised practicum in counselling, and had taken courses in principles of guidance, statistics, general psychology and counselling theory, but many were weak in diagnostic training, child psychology and experiences in consulting. Zingle and Merchant reported that over two thirds of the counsellors "conduct parent conferences to discuss a child's needing help in terms of a special class or agency referral" (p.207), but few consult with parents on normal developmental concerns. Parent group work was also infrequent and visits to homes seldom occurred. The authors recommended that, due to heavy counsellor-pupil ratios, counsellors should do more teacher and parent consultation and group counselling with children.

A report on the 1976 B.C. Conference on the Family (Friesen 1977) provides some indication of public opinion, albeit with predictable bias, on counsellor-family interaction. Friesen reports

> As is self evident from the recommendations, the Conference delegates perceived counselling in the schools to have a significant role to play, both in the prevention of social problems as well as in crisis intervention. Since the family network is the most vital, lasting and influential force in the life of man, the relationship between social, emotional and learning problems with family functioning needs to be more fully explored by the (school) counsellor. Thus families of children with learning disabilities require additional support and consultation and perhaps family counselling. (p.72)

The Conference expressed concern over the lack of well trained family counsellors and recommended that school boards be encouraged to hire trained family counsellors for preventive and crisis oriented counselling.

Laughren and Herman (1975) studied mothers' and daughters' perceptions of the role of the counsellor by surveying Grade 12 girls (N = 163) and their mothers. He reported that both groups saw counsellor functions limited primarily to educational and vocational areas, and non-inclusive of personal, emotional or social problems. He suggested that counsellors may need to inform the public of their training and abilities so that families may recognize them as sources of assistance in areas other than strictly educational problems.

Sware (1969) also reported that parents of junior high school students indicated by means of a Q - sort that counsellors should not attempt to counsel parents or deal with problems involving conflicts between students and their parents. He did find, however, that some parents were open to counsellors learning about the students' families in order to help the student with family related and other concerns.

Fitzsimmons (1978) surveyed students and parents to obtain their perceptions on counsellor role. He found that parents expect counsellors to (1) recognize their limitations and perceive the necessity for referrals, (2) speak and write understandably, (3) aid their clients in exploring their philosophy and attitudes to work and establishing realistic occupational goals and (4) assist students in recognizing the consequences of their behavior, and making decisions for change. He reported that students saw counsellors as providing acceptance and understanding, doing assessments and offering help in learning skill programs.

Fitzsimmons also reported on the views of supervisors and teachers on counsellors functions. Both groups classified as important the functions of psychometrics, occupational and career counselling, and professional development. In addition, supervisors saw counsellors as helping to reduce friction and maintain the status quo.

Teachers thought counsellors should assist in analyzing student behavior and remediating social skills. None evidently saw working with families as being important.

Allan (1976) surveyed Superintendents and Directors of School Districts in the B.C. school systems. He reported "a growing awareness of the need for primary prevention and early intervention" (p.37), but also a need for a change in attitudes by parents and teachers in the direction of a more positive view of counselling and the provision of counselling services. Allan reported that only 10% of high school counsellors had Master's degrees and that not all of those were in counselling. He stated that it was

> common knowledge in the B.C. school system that principals tend to move three groups of teachers into counselling positions (1) those who are "good" with students, (2) those who had administration aspirations, and (3) those who cannot make it in the classroom. (p.38)

Allan's survey showed that the greatest immediate needs were seen to be counsellor skills in individual counselling and teacher consultation, but skills in family counselling were also seen to be important along with small group counselling and career education. His report stated that "help with families replaces that of discipline problems and crisis counselling in the area of 'greatest need right now'" (p.39) due to problems in the home such as separation, divorce, death and alcoholism.

Herman, Altmann & Sears (1971) reported on another study of Superintendents' perceptions of the role of the counsellor and stated that "although many counsellors are involved in consultative functions, superintendents expressed a desire for additional and improved services for both parents and staff consultation" (p.268).

Hassard and Costar (1977) examined principals' perceptions of ideal counsellor role, and the problems arising from conflicting views of counsellor functions in

these two groups. They report that principals generally view the counsellor's position as one of administrative support whereas counsellors perceived their role to be more closely associated with the needs of individual students. They state that

> The result has been that job descriptions for secondary school counsellors often include duties that are broad in their scope, vaguely defined and sometimes incompatible. (p.196)

Hassard and Costar state that principals are the most significant determiners of how the counsellor functions in the school. Their findings include (1) that there is broad general agreement between principals and counsellors on counsellor functions, (2) there are definite differences in perceptions of the ideal role of the counsellor, (3) principals' perceptions of counsellor functions vary with demands on their own position, their needs for control and leadership and for information on which to make administrative decisions and evaluations, (4) that principals and counsellors tend to use role bargaining to negotiate their roles, but principals hold greater power in this process. However, counsellors held some degree of influence through their ability to interpret student needs. Principals saw a need for greater clarification and communication of the counsellor role to the public.

Reports of Programs Involving Counsellors and Families

The literature on counsellor-family interaction contains numerous reports on specific programs. Some of these are designed for families in general. Others are designed for groups experiencing specific types of problems.

Agati and Iovino (1974) have reported on the implementation of a five week parent group counselling program using an Adlerian-Dreikurs orientation. The results of this program were invitations from other community groups to work with parents, the initiation of a group with teachers and a request by parents for a course in communication skills.

They also stated that parents began to accept the counsellors as an important and integral part of the educational process.

Duncan and Fitzgerald (1969) have described some experimental research on counsellor-parent conferences. Working with a control group of parents who were included in a group orientation meeting and an experimental group of parents each of whom took part in a one hour conference with counsellors, they reported the following conclusions. Students of parents in the experimental group showed a higher average attendance rate, fewer dropouts and a higher grade point average. Parents of this group followed the initial conference with more contact with the school. There was no significant difference found in disciplinary referrals, but an increase in parent-child communication was seen though at non-significant levels.

Bernstein (1976) has reported on a two year program of the provision of psychoterapy within a school system. He states

> In summary, the CRT (Child Resource Team) has, in its two years of operation, demonstrated the feasibility of providing a whole-child oriented, modified miliey approach to psycho-therapy within a school system and, in the process, helped to define a role for the school psychologist not often encouraged or even available today. (p.320)

Shelton & Dobson (1973) have described a model for family counsellor communication. "The Family Involvement Communication Systems (FICS) a multi-faceted model for family involvement, enables the counsellor to coordinate consulting services within the school" (p.210). Components of this model include case studies, child studies, home visitations, a parent room in the school and a guidance committee. Participants include teachers, administrators, parents and the school nurse.

Local school counsellors have also reported on programs involving counsellors and parents. Melnychuk (1978)

has reported that, within one Edmonton high school, guidance and counselling has traditionally been two thirds problem-centered and one third preventive/developmental. As part of a program to reverse this ratio, parenteen seminars were developed which included presentations on specific topics such as drug use and parenting followed by small group interaction. Urquhart (1978) reports on a six week program on group counselling with parents using a Transactional Analysis approach. Goals of this group were "to look at healthy and unhealthy life patterns, how parents program their children and how to make 'winners' of children" (p.29).

Other articles look at programs specific to groups where a major problem exists. McWhirter and Cabanski (1972) report on a program developed in a day school for learning disabled children. The program involved individual parent contact by counsellors, parent visits to the school and observation of classes, parent education groups and counselling groups. They reported a 75% participation by parents in this program and good feedback from both parents and teachers.

Ford and West (1979) conducted an experimental study with parents of personality disordered pre-adolescent boys. Based on Rogerian theory, parents in an experimental group were taught to communicate empathy, warmth and genuineness in their relationships with their sons. The results of the study indicated parents in the experimental group learned to respond with significantly higher levels of empathy, warmth and genuiness than parents in the control group were doing and that the human relations program was an effective way of improving parenting skills. The boys' increase in positive assertive behavior was also significant, although certain other variables measured were relatively unchanged.

Referral as an Alternative

A common response to the problem of school children

impaired by family related problems is that the family should be referred to community agencies for counselling or therapy. A number of people writing about school counsellors caution that the process of referral is neither simple nor always effective (Huff, 1968, Csapo and Friesen, 1979, Boyd, 1974, Conti, 1975).

Zingle and Merchant (1977) report that over two thirds of counsellors refer to community agencies. Huff (1968) states that although, "No counsellor can hope to be all things to all students", he must continue to be involved in consultations after referral during treatment and follow up procedures. Csapo and Friesen (1979) caution that many parents with problems seldom go to the social agency to which they have been referred.

Boyd (1974) gives the following reasons for counsellors to refer--knowledge of professional adequacy, client preference to work with professionals outside of the school setting, and individual needs for specialized services. He states that as professionals, counsellors have the responsibility for knowing of extra - school, qualified agencies, and that "one of the rights retained by the professional is the right to determine when client problems are appropriate for his capacity" (p.327).

Boyd agrees that counsellors should maintain involvement with clients while they are working with other agencies, but most importantly while the client is going through the initial stages such as consideration of the referral, discussions with family members and the initial interview. He comments that "Fear of the unknown and potential financial drain make referral difficult" (p.325).

Conti (1975) studied variables related to the contacting or not contacting of counselling services recommended by school psychologists. He found that high motivation and naming of specific counselling resources were of great importance as was the expressed confidence of the school psychologist in the abilities of the agency. The number of conferences between the school counsellor and both parents or the whole family was also found to be important to

whether the family followed through with the referral, with contact more likely as the number of conferences increased. Conti suggested that it was important that concerns and resistances of both parents relative to the referral be fully dealt with.

Some Other Points of View

Much of the opposition to counsellor-family interaction has come in the form of caution--that is that the counsellor limit his work to that of an educational nature (Van Hesteren, 1979), that the parents most in need of assistance tend to be uncooperative (Conti, 1975, Hillman & Carlson, 1975), that job definitions and expectations of supervisors tend to contra-indicate this type of work (Gilmore, 1974, Hassard & Costar, 1977) or that there is too little counsellor time (Bergstein, 1965).

Faust (1968) responds strongly to what he sees as "administrative and teacher pressures to spend some ten to twenty percent of (the counsellor's) efforts in parent consultations" (p.85). His arguments opposing counsellor interaction with parents focus on several points. First he states that

> It cannot be emphasized too often that the new counsellor's developmental emphasis does not bypass much parent or family consultation because much work is ineffective. It is rather that the counsellor cannot afford the drain on his time and energy and still hope to build a new world for children. (p.82)

Faust insists that there are not enough hours in the week for school counsellors to work with parents. Secondly, he argues that it is impossible to engage most parents, especially fathers, in a counselling relationship, especially those who need it most, and that the drop out rate in counselling families is very high. His third argument is that effective counselling may result in the release of considerable affective behavior in families and temporarily disrupted relationships. He feels that this may create problems related to public opinion and the image of the counsellor with those who do not understand the process,

especially the school administration. Faust cautions that only where such work is sure to provide exceptional assistance to the student should parental counselling be considered.

Glasser (1969) writes that, in contrast to the ordinary view that children's need for love must be met in the home, he believes children's needs for both love and identity can be fulfilled in the schools. His position would de-emphasize the importance of counsellors working with families to a large degree.

Boyd (1974) though generally supportive of counsellor-family interaction provides another caution.

> Further, some students who appear to be acting inappropriately to school personnel are accurately reflecting and actively participating in a harmonious family relationship. This may be the result of the differing cultural expectations of home and school. (p.315)

In summary, there is a considerable body of literature supporting school counsellor interaction with families of students as an effective approach to assisting students with problems. Although this review has found that there is some confusion in conflicting definitions of terms such as counselling and consulting, and some expressed caution that school counsellors should emphasize educational rather than therapeutic models, writers generally advocate an increase in work with families or parents of students. The following chapter describes the design of a survey implemented to learn if counsellors working in Edmonton schools perceive value in counsellor-family interaction similar to that expressed in that literature.

Chapter III

Methodology

Procedure

Three questionnaires were developed to ascertain the views of parents of students, and counsellors and principals from elementary and junior secondary schools in Edmonton regarding counsellor-family interaction. Approval was obtained from the Edmonton Public School Board and the Edmonton Separate School Board for the study and questionnaires were sent by mail to counsellors, principals and parents randomly selected from lists provided by the two school systems. Follow-up letters were mailed to all individuals who had not responded approximately three weeks following the mailing of the questionnaire to encourage them to do so. The letters included a request that the researcher be phoned if questionnaires had been lost. In all, 53% of the questionnaires were returned. The responses were then coded, keypunched and entered into the University of Alberta computer for analysis of the data.

The Sample

Counsellors, principals and parents of students from Edmonton schools were selected as the population for this study. Counsellors were considered of paramount importance as the study focused on their role and activities in the school systems. Principals were included as they have been said to be important determiners of counsellors' roles (See Chapter II). The importance of parents' views cannot be overlooked as they are a necessary partner in any counsellor-family interaction.

Edmonton school systems were chosen for practical reasons such as the immediate proximity and resulting ease

of communication. In addition, Edmonton schools employ a large number of counsellors in the elementary grades and the trends established in Edmonton are frequently influential in the surrounding smaller school districts. Elementary and junior secondary school personnel were selected because family intervention is often more important for children in these age groups who are less autonomous than students in the senior secondary grades who can often respond more independently in individual counselling relationships.

Both school systems in Edmonton were chosen for this survey because of a stated difference in their policies regarding counsellor-family interaction. In interviews with the Directors of Counselling Services in both school systems it was learned that within the Edmonton Public system, counsellors are encouraged to interact with parents in activities of a consultative or educational nature but not encouraged to do family counselling (Nichols, Note 1). In Edmonton Separate schools family counselling is also encouraged when it is deemed necessary (Brosseau, Note 3). The effects of these administrative policies could be measured by including both systems in the population of the survey.

The following techniques were used to provide random samples of the above populations. The Edmonton Public School Board provided a list of parent names and addresses obtained by a computer selection of every "n"th name throughout the school system. One hundred and twenty-nine names were included. The Edmonton Separate School Board provided a list of names and addresses of families of the entire student population of ten schools chosen at random. Thirty-three names were systematically sampled by choosing every "n"th name from this list. Both school systems provided complete lists of elementary and junior secondary school counsellors and principals. The samples for the survey were taken from these lists using a table of random numbers.

Development of the Questionnaires

The questionnaires for counsellors and principals were constructed to provide data on the perceived value of counsellor-family interaction, the nature of the interaction, the degree of influence on counsellor time allocations by other school personnel and the barriers to increased counsellor-family interaction. The questionnaire for parents sought information on how aware parents are about the provision of counselling services in the schools, how important they perceived counselling activities to be and whether or not they were willing to participate in specified activities with counsellors. (See Appendix for questionnaires).

As determination of the perceived value of counsellor-family interaction was of primary importance to this study, three measures of the perceived importance of this work were chosen for the counsellor and principal questionnaires. The first of these was a ranking of the perceived importance of interaction with families in comparison with other activities typically performed by counsellors. The activities included were derived from discussions with working counsellors, counselling consultants and consultants to this study and appeared to include most if not all of the activities being carried out by present school counsellors.

The rationale for the inclusion of this question was that it was thought to be important to place the interaction between counsellors and families into a comparative and comprehensive picture of counselling functions. To understand how counsellors and principals view the importance of working with families we must also know how this compares with all other aspects of the counselling role.

The second measure of the value of counsellor-family interaction was the amount of time counsellors are spending working with families. Subject to external variables such as other influences on time allocations and barriers which limit the amount of time spent in interaction with families, the percentage of time chosen by counsellors

to work with families provides an indication of their perception of the value of this approach. Although time may be an imprecise method for measuring importance due to the varying nature of the activities themselves, it is a valuable adjunct to the other two measures, as it is based on what counsellors are doing rather than what they are thinking.

The third measure of the perceived value of counsellor-family interaction was the amount of time counsellors would choose to spend with families in a hypothesized ideal situation where no barriers exist to limit their work with families. The questionnaire was planned so that this question followed questions which specified barriers likely to be relevant so that a mental set for hypothesizing an ideal situation would be established.

The nature and depth of counsellor-family interaction was ascertained by asking respondents to identify the percentage of time spent in specific activities in which counsellors interact with families and to rank these activities in order of their perceived importance. It can be assumed that the degree and intensity of interaction between counsellor and parents will be far less at a typical school orientation meeting or through a telephone interview than it will be during ongoing family counselling. It is important to know how the counsellor who is spending a certain percentage of his time with families is utilizing this time. In view of the literature supporting specific approaches for working with families and to provide further data related to the nature of counsellor-family interaction, counsellors were asked to identify the theoretical orientation which applied to their work.

To determine if other personnel in the school have an important influence in determining the way the counsellor's time is distributed as suggested by Hassard and Costar, a seven-point scale was chosen as a way for respondents to indicate specifically the amount of influence held by

individuals (principals, teachers) or groups (consensus of staff) on counsellor time allocations.

Seven-point scales were also chosen to rate the existence and importance of barriers to counsellor-family interaction. The questions were constructed so that respondents were asked initially if they have found that barriers exist. If their response to that question was affirmative, they were then requested to state the importance of specified types of barriers (also by means of a seven-point scale). The barriers applied to these questions were chosen from a consideration of the literature on this topic and appeared to include all substantial barriers to increased work with families. A final question on this topic was constructed to provide a rank ordering of the most important barriers in the event that several were marked 1 or 2 to indicate major importance.

In view of the frequency with which referral is cited as the alternative to counselling families in schools, counsellors were asked to indicate how often they use referral as a way of helping families of students in order to assist the child in the educational process. Responses to this item also provide some indication of the counsellors' views on the number of families needing help.

Finally, a number of statements were constructed to reflect commonly held attitudes related to the issue of family versus educational needs, and working with families as a school counsellor function. Respondents were asked to indicate their agreement with these statements on a seven-point scale from strongly agree to strongly disagree. Certain demographic data was also included for the purposes of investigating the possibilities of correlations between variables such as counsellor training and experience with other data obtained.

Counsellor and principal forms were constructed to be sufficiently similar to allow uniform comparisons between the two groups. Questions relating to specific percentages

of time spent by counsellors in various activities and the theoretical orientations used by counsellors in their work with families were omitted on the principal form. This was done because many principals may not have this information and to avoid having the principal request this information from the counsellor creating an invalid consensus.

The parent questionnaire was constructed to ask parents what available family related services provided by school counsellors they are aware of, to signify their willingness to participate in specified activities and to indicate which family related activities they would like to see made available more often. The rationale for the inclusion of these questions was as follows. Although uniform comparisons between counsellors', principals' and parents responses would have been desirable, it seemed inevitable that there would be a wide range in parents' understanding of the counselling role in the school. In addition parent attitudes towards counsellors may be contingent upon what counselling services are available in the school(s) their children attend and how well parents are made aware of these services. For these reasons the formulation of items for the parent questionnaire was different in many areas from the other two forms. While some uniform comparisons were felt to be necessary (thus the ranking of counsellor functions was included) and so included despite the chance that parents might have less information on which to base responses, other questions related to families specifically were reformulated to provide information on the parents awareness and contact with the school and their willingness to participate in interaction with counsellors in specified activities (See parent questionnaire in Appendix). This latter information was included as important corresponding data to the views of counsellors and principals as outlined in the literature concerning parental reticence as a barrier to increased family work.

Validity and Reliability

The content validity for the three questionnaire forms was established by relating each question on each form to the topic being investigated, and by ensuring that questions individual to each form were relevant and answerable by the respondents to whom they were addressed as described in the previous section. Adequate coverage of the topic was ensured by the inclusion of several measures for the most important area, the value of counsellor-family interaction, and thorough consideration of all areas derived from the review of literature and related to the topic. The questions and corresponding directions were formulated to adhere to these criteria, and then reviewed and revised with considerable consultation until they were considered clearly stated and subject to minimal interpretation. The validity of the counsellor and parent forms were further assessed by their use in a pilot study (N = 5), following which participants were interviewed regarding the overall clarity and ease of completion of the instrument. (The principal form was not subjected to pilot study as all items from it are included in the counsellor form). Following the pilot study, the completed questionnaires were considered to be adequate in terms of content validity to be successfully used in this project.

Since the questionnaires as constructed employed items generally independent of each other, the establishment of reliability by the usual statistical methods (split-half) was not considered to be feasible. This study must therefore rely upon the validity of the questionnaires and the promotion of a high response rate due to an anticipated intrinsic interest in the problem for those asked to respond.

The Analysis of Data

Data from the questionnaires was coded, keypunched and entered into the University of Alberta computer. The data was categorized into four subgroups for counsellor, principal, parent and total group comparisons. Frequency distributions and descriptive statistics including three

measures of central tendency, standard deviations and variance, range, skewness and kurtosis were calculated for all variables in all groups. Data was then categorized into further subgroups in order to calculate the same statistics for public and separate school systems.

Cross tabulations were drawn to facilitate comparisons in the parent group between socio-economic status as determined by the Blishen scale and rank ordering of counsellor activities and between single parents versus intact families and rank ordering variables. The counsellor variables of training, experience, number of schools, number of students and grades were broken down and cross tabulated with rank ordering data to facilitate comparisons between these variables.

Finally, rank correlations were calculated between the real and ideal family related activities within counsellor and principal groups.

This chapter has described the methodology employed in a survey carried out in Edmonton schools and homes to learn how school counsellors, principals and parents of students perceive the value of counsellor-family interaction and the problems which may exist in this type of work. The results obtained from the analysis of the questionnaires used in this survey are reported in the following chapter.

Chapter IV

Results and Discussion

One hundred and seventy-six questionnaires were returned out of the three hundred and thirty-three which were mailed. This response rate of 52.8% was broken down as shown in Table 1.

Table 1

Numbers and Percentages of Groups Responding

Group	EPSB		ESSB		Total	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Counsellors	37	57.8	15	71.4	52	61.2
Principals	35	53.8	17	80.9	52	60.5
Parents	58	44.9	14	42.4	72	44.4
Total	130		46		176	

Principals and counsellors from the Edmonton Separate School system responded at significantly higher rates than those of the Edmonton Public School system, but parent response rates were similar from the two systems. Counsellors and principals responded at higher rates than parents in both systems. Oppenheim (1966) states that typical response figures range from 40% to 60%, and rarely reach 80% even for interested groups. Travers (1964) presents much lower figures ranging from 20% to 40% with considerable follow up work. Based on Oppenheim's criteria, counsellor and principal responses can be considered to be very adequate. Travers' criteria would place all groups in this survey above the average range.

Description of the Sample

Counsellor Sample Fifty out of 52 counsellors provided data about their training, experience, number of schools and students. Twenty-eight percent have only a Bachelor's degree, while 40% hold a graduate diploma in counselling and 27% hold Masters degrees. Counsellor experience ranged from one to twenty-three years with a mean of 6.26, although 21% of respondents had one year or less experience in counselling.

Forty-two percent of counsellors responding were employed in only one school. Of the remaining 58%, 35% worked in two schools, 12% in three schools and 8% in more than three schools. Within these schools counsellor-pupil ratios ranged from 1 : 150 to 1 : 1900 with a mean ratio of 1 : 632. Eighty-eight percent worked in elementary schools, and 12% worked solely in junior high schools, although a large number (50%) worked in grades ranging from elementary through junior high school with 4% working in senior high school grades as well.

Principal Sample Of 51 principals responding to questions about school classification and numbers of students, 65% were in charge of elementary schools, 17% were junior secondary school principals and 15% administered combined elementary-junior high schools. The numbers of students in these schools ranged from 50 to 660 with a mean of 335 students.

Parent Sample In 71% of parents (N = 51) the respondent was the student's mother. Sixteen fathers (22%) responded, as did two guardians. Three couples filled out the questionnaire together. Nine respondents (12%) were single parents; the remainder were from intact families. The ages of parents ranged from 24 to 60 with a mean of 37.

These parents had from one to nine children, the mean being 3.18 and the median being 2.73. Seventy-one percent of the parents had from one to three children. The percentages of children at various grade levels could not

be calculated because while some parents indicated the numbers of children at each level, others responded by check mark indicating only that they had children in specific levels.

The Blishen scale was used for determining the socio-economic status of parental respondents. Blishen, Jones, Naegele & Porter (1968) suggested that the use of deciles is advantageous in categorizing the Canadian population into socioeconomic status categories as "nearly a third of the Canadian labour force hold occupations scoring below 30.00 on the index, and nearly another third hold occupations scoring between 30.00 and 39.99". Table 2 shows how the socioeconomic status of parental respondents was categorized as outlined by the above guidelines.

Table 2
Socioeconomic Classifications

Groups	Number	%	Index Range	Description
1	43	59.7	Above 40.00	Professional, managerial White collar workers
2	19	26.4	30.00 to 39.99	Skilled labour
3	10	13.9	To 29.99	Unskilled labour

Of 72 parents responding 60% were from Group 1, 26% were from Group 2 and 14% were from Group 3. Only 14% of respondents therefore were from the lowest one third of the Canadian population while 60% were from the highest one third. Although parents of school aged children in Edmonton may be of slightly higher socioeconomic status on the average than the Canadian labour force as a whole, it would still appear evident that lower class parents have responded at lower rates than other groups as predicted.

Table 3

Measures of Parent Contact with the Schools

	No. of Responses	Mean	Range
Parent visits to school	69	7.07	1 - 80
Meetings with teachers	62	2.63	1 - 9
Meetings with counsellors	13	1.77	1 - 4

The frequency of parents' visits to their children's schools as shown in Table 3, ranged from zero to 80 with a mean of 7.07 and a median of 3.94. It is likely the higher frequencies may be associated with some regularly scheduled activity such as volunteer work in the schools. Sixty-two parents had held from one to nine meetings with teachers (mean = 2.62) and thirteen parents had had from one to four meetings with counsellors. Twenty-nine percent of parents (N = 21) had attended parent education groups, and 8% (N = 6) had been previously referred for family counselling by school counsellors or community agencies.

High variability was seen in parental attitudes to the schools in general. Table 4 shows parental agreement with statements regarding satisfaction with their contact with the schools.

Table 4

Measures of Parent Satisfaction with the Schools

	No. Marked Mean	1 & 2 Agree	3,4,5 Not sure	6,7 Disagree
The schools provide information -	3.89	28.8%	46.9%	24.2%
I feel free to visit school and talk to teachers -	3.15	56.3%	16.9%	26.8%
Satisfied with contact with schools -	3.58	40.8%	36.6%	22.5%
Satisfied with contact with counsellors -	4.55	23.2%	32.1%	44.6%

Forty-four percent of parents stated strongly that they feel free to visit the school and talk with teachers whenever they feel the need to do so, but 24% strongly disagreed with that statement. The mean rating for the statement was 3.15 on a seven point scale.

Forty percent of parents were satisfied with the amount of their contact with the schools, but 23% were generally dissatisfied. The mean rating for the statement was 3.57.

Equally variable were levels of agreement with the statement that the schools provide accurate and up-to-date information on (the) children's activities and progress. This statement had an agreement rating of 3.89 out of seven. Eighteen percent of respondents were satisfied with their contact with school counsellors, but 5% were dissatisfied. This statement had a mean rating of 4.55 but twenty-two percent of respondents indicated that the statement did not apply to them.

Because of the lower response rate by parents of both school systems, the low percentage of returns from the lowest socioeconomic group and the high variability in parent responses, any conclusions drawn from parent responses must be considered to be very tentative at best. Conclusions related to data received from counsellors and principals, however, can be made with greater confidence as response rates were considerably higher in these groups although a high level of variability is seen in the responses of these groups as well.

Ranking of Counsellor Functions

All groups were asked to rank specified counsellor activities in order of their importance. Counsellors were asked to indicate the percentage of their time spent in these activities as well. Table 5 gives the mean ranking for each activity for each group and for the total group in the order in which the total group ranked these functions.

Table 5

Mean Ranking of Counsellor Functions

Activities	Groups							
	Counsellors		Principals		Parents		Total Group	
Individual Pers. Couns.	2.22	(1)	2.06	(1)	3.06	(1)	2.52	(1)
Consult. with teachers	3.00	(2)	2.98	(2)	3.97	(4)	3.39	(2)
Comm. with parents	3.57	(3)	3.92	(4)	3.61	(2)	3.69	(3)
Group Counselling	3.94	(4)	3.55	(3)	4.81	(6)	4.18	(4)
Testing	6.83	(7)	5.04	(5)	3.85	(3)	5.08	(5)
Vocational Guidance	6.90	(8)	7.04	(7)	4.74	(5)	6.05	(6)
Affective Education	4.24	(5)	5.45	(6)	8.89	(10)	6.49	(7)
Program Development	6.82	(6)	7.20	(8)	6.81	(9)	6.93	(8)
Teaching	8.30	(9)	8.16	(9)	6.50	(8)	7.49	(9)
Administration	8.41	(10)	8.70	(10)	6.14	(7)	7.53	(10)
	N = 52		N = 52		N = 72		N = 176	

As is evident in Table 5, there is considerable similarity between all groups in their ranking of the importance of these activities. Counsellors' and principals' rankings correlated most significantly (r_s = .928). Parental and principals rankings were second in degree of similarity (r_s = .685).

Individual personal counselling was seen to be the

most important counsellor function by all groups. Counsellors and principals ranked consultation with teachers second, whereas parents placed communication with parents in second place. Overall, communication with parents was ranked third with a mean ranking of 3.69 out of 10. In contrast to counsellors and principals, parents tended to rank affective education very low and testing quite high in importance. It can be hypothesized that some parents may be unfamiliar with the meaning of affective education and unaware that other specialists as well as counsellors within the Edmonton School systems play a major part in the testing of children. With more information, parental rankings might be more similar to those of counsellors and principals with respect to these two variables.

Table 6

Mean Percent of Time Spent in Counsellor Activities

Activity	Mean	Rank
Individual Personal Counselling	19.34	(1)
Consultation with Teachers	10.28	(4)
Communication with Parents	8.15	(6)
Group Counselling	10.70	(3)
Testing	5.99	(8)
Vocational Guidance	5.62	(9)
Affective Education	10.22	(5)
Program Development	4.97	(10)
Teaching	18.72	(2)
Administration	6.01	(7)

Although counsellors have ranked teaching ninth in importance, it is in second place in mean percentage of time spent with counsellors spending on the average more than 18% of their time in teaching regular or special classes. It can be assumed, however, that teaching duties

are a practical requirement of the school systems and minimally affected by counsellors' choices in comparison with other functions. Ranking of the mean percentage of time spent in these counsellor activities with teaching omitted shows a high similarity to counsellor rankings of the importance of these activities (r_s = .767), although the two ranks are not significantly associated when teaching duties are included (r_s = .455).

Group counselling plays a somewhat larger part in the distribution of counsellor time than in its considered importance. Consultation with parents is lower in terms of time spent than in perceived importance with an average of 8% of counsellor time spent on this type of activity. This may mean that there is frequent interaction with parents but of short duration. It might be, on the other hand, that other factors are intervening in the carrying out of parent communication functions. No differences dependent on the variables of counsellor training and experience or numbers of schools or students were found in the percentage of time spent in different activities.

A number of respondents included items previously unspecified in their ranking of counsellor activities by using the "other" designation. The majority of these corresponded with specified activities, but, in addition, liaison with community agencies was mentioned by a few respondents in all groups as being important. The importance of such liaison was supported by questionnaire data indicating that counsellors refer approximately 14 families per year (range = 0 to 50) to community agencies.

In summary, all groups perceive individual personal counselling to be the most important function for school counsellors and the highest percentage of time is spent in this activity. Consultation with teachers and communication with parents are next in importance to all groups.

Ranking of Family-related Activity

Principals and counsellors were asked to rank five

activities related to counsellor-family interaction with a sixth position for an unspecified "other". Though high levels of variability were consistent throughout this question, counsellors' and principals' rankings of activities were identical when means were placed in order. Consultation was seen as the most important family related activity followed by telephone interviews, parent education and orientation to school programs. Intensive or ongoing family counselling was placed last.

Table 7
Mean Ranking of Importance & Percentage of Time in Family Related Activities

Activities	Counsellors	Principals	% of Time
Orientation activities	3.40 (4)	3.39 (4)	12.4 (4)
Interview by telephone	2.38 (2)	2.42 (2)	32.1 (2)
Meeting and consultation	1.34 (1)	1.53 (1)	32.4 (1)
Parent education	3.28 (3)	3.38 (3)	15.8 (3)
Counselling	4.55 (5)	4.18 (5)	7.6 (5)

The same order was found in the distribution of counsellor time between these activities. Of time spent working with families, counsellors spend 32% in consultation (range = 10% to 80%), 32% in telephone conversations with parents, 16% in parent education and 12% in school orientation activities. Seven percent of the time spent in family related activities is spent in family counselling (range = 5% to 20%). Referral and liaison with other agencies were mentioned as "other" important activities.

A slightly different type of information related to counsellor-family interaction was sought from parents. Parents were asked of which specified services available from counsellors they were aware, and in which activities

they would participate. They were also questioned about which activities they would like to see made available more often, information which can be seen as a rough estimate of the perceived value of these activities for parents. Table 8 shows parental responses to these questions.

Table 8

Percentage of Parents Responding Positively to Questions on Family Related Activities

Activities	Aware & Available	Willing to Participate	Would like More Often
Orientation to school programs	34.7 (3)	59.7 (3)	27.8 (3)
Interview by telephone	65.3 (2)	65.3 (2)	31.9 (2)
Meeting and Consult'n	81.9 (1)	87.5 (1)	45.8 (1)
Parent education	23.6 (4)	45.8 (4)	22.2 (4)
Counselling	13.9 (5)	45.8 (4)	18.1 (5)

Most parents were aware that the opportunity for consultation with the school counsellor was available to them either through the format of a meeting (81.9%) or by telephone (65.3%). Less than one quarter (23.6%) thought that parent education groups were available at the school. The number of parents indicating that specified services should be offered more often was fewer than the number responding to the other two questions. A few respondents commented in response to this question that they had experienced no need for these services to date and this comment may have been true for many others as well. In response to this question too, parents placed primary importance on consultation as the most desirable activity for counsellors to increase.

The willingness of parental respondents to participate in various activities related to counsellor-family

interaction if requested to do so ranged from 6% who would participate in both parent education and family counselling to 87% who expressed willingness to engage in consultative interaction. Though these tentative conclusions appear very positive in contrast to professional concerns about parental reticence as a barrier to counsellor-family interaction, the bias introduced by non-returns may have particular relevance for this question.

The data in the parents' responses to questions about their reaction to specific activities related to families was also broken down to facilitate comparisons between single parent and intact families and between socioeconomic groups. Table 9 shows the frequency and percentage of parents from each socioeconomic group who responded positively to questions related to specific activities involving counsellors and families.

It is obvious that more confidence can be placed in the relative percentages of responses associated with Group 1 who represent the upper third of the Canadian population, as the number in this group is so much larger than those in the other two groups. Keeping this in mind, it is interesting to note that in all respects parents in Group 3, the lowest socioeconomic group, responded relatively more frequently than parents in Group 2, the middle third, both that they thought family related services were available in the schools, and that they were willing to participate in counsellor-family interaction (Counselling $p > .05$, others $p < .05$).

Several factors may be contributing to this response pattern. First, counsellors in lower socioeconomic areas of the city may be offering more services to families and may have had greater contact with them. Professionals such as counsellors may also be held in higher esteem as experts by this group. Secondly, the bias involved in non-returns may be affecting this data. For these few who responded from Group 3, however, their interest and willingness to participate in work with school counsellors is impressive.

Ranking of activities throughout the socioeconomic groups was consistent, however, with meeting and consultation the type of family related activity perceived to be most important followed by telephone discussion and orientation programs.

Table 10 compares single parents with parents from intact families in their responses to these same questions.

Table 9

Frequency & Percentage of Positive Parental Responses to Family Related Activities According to Socioeconomic Status

Questions	Socioeconomic Status 1		2		3		Total	
Aware Services are Available	Fr.	%	Fr.	%	Fr.	%	Fr.	%
Orientation	17	39.5	5	26.3	3	30	25	34.7
Telephone	27	62.8	11	57.9	9	90	47	65.3
Meeting/Consult'n	37	86.0	13	68.4	9	90	59	81.9
Parent education	10	23.2	3	15.8	4	40	17	23.6
Counselling	7	16.3	1	5.3	2	20	10	13.9
Would Participate								
Orientation	27	62.8	10	52.6	6	60	43	59.7
Telephone	28	65.1	12	63.2	7	70	47	65.3
Meeting/Consult'n	39	90.7	14	73.7	10	100	63	87.5
Parent education	18	41.9	8	42.1	7	70	33	45.8
Counselling	21	48.8	5	26.3	7	70	33	45.8
Should Offer More								
Orientation	12	27.9	6	31.6	2	20	20	27.8
Telephone	13	30.2	6	31.6	4	40	23	31.9
Meeting/Consult'n	24	55.8	3	15.8	6	60	33	45.8
Parent education	11	25.6	3	15.8	2	20	16	22.2
Counselling	8	18.6	1	5.3	4	40	13	18.1
Total No.	43		19		10		72	

Table 10

Frequency and Percentage of Positive Parental Responses By Single Parent and Intact Families

Activity	Intact Family		Single Parent	
	Fr.	%	Fr.	%
Aware Services are Available				
Orientation	24	38.7	1	44.4
Telephone	41	66.1	5	55.6
Meeting/Consult'n	52	83.9	6	66.7
Parent education	14	22.6	3	33.3
Counselling	7	11.2	3	33.3
Would Participate				
Orientation	39	62.9	3	33.3
Telephone	41	66.1	5	55.5
Meeting/Consult'n	56	90.3	6	66.7
Parent education	30	48.3	3	33.3
Counselling	29	46.7	4	44.4
Should Offer More				
Orientation	18	29.0	2	22.2
Telephone	19	30.6	4	44.4
Meeting/Consult'n	29	46.8	4	44.4
Parent Education	13	20.9	3	33.3
Total Number	63		9	

This data suggests that single parents may be more knowledgeable about counselling services, but may also be less willing to participate in interaction with school counsellors. It is possible that single parents may have been in contact with counsellors more frequently than parents in intact families. It is also likely that they may be

burdened with heavier schedules than parents in intact families or more apprehensive about being judged than other parents. These results, however, do not reach statistical significance and may be due to the small number of single parents ($p > .10$). It is interesting to note, nevertheless, that in spite of some hesitancy about participating in such activities, many single parent respondents were in favour of such services as counselling and parent education being offered more frequently.

In summary, the mean ranking of family related activities by counsellors, principals and parents show a very high degree of similarity. Counsellors and principals placed slightly more emphasis on parent education than parents did while parents felt that orientation activities were more important. In other words, principals and counsellors felt parents should know more about parenting, while parents wanted to know more about the schools. All groups, however, thought that meeting and consultation activities were of primary importance.

Real Versus Ideal Interaction

Counsellors were asked to indicate what percentage of time they spent in communication with families. They were also asked to estimate how much time they would choose to work with families in an unrestricted ideal counselling situation. Counsellor respondents are presently spending between 1% and 30% of their time in counsellor-family interaction, with a mean of 11.5%. They indicated, however, that given an ideal setting they would choose to spend from 10% to 80% of their time working with families. This data had a mean of 35.8. Eighty-eight percent of counsellors indicated that they saw a need for increased interaction with families of students within the school system.

Table 11 shows the mean rankings of family related activities by counsellors and principals within the present systems in comparison to rankings in an ideal situation.

Table 11
Mean Rankings of Real Versus Ideal
Family Related Activities

Activities	Counsellor Rankings		Principals' Rankings	
	Real	Ideal	Real	Ideal
Orientation	3.40	3.87	3.39	3.62
Telephone	2.38	3.17	2.42	2.97
Meeting/Consult'n	1.34	1.60	1.53	1.49
Parent education	3.28	2.57	3.38	2.84
Counselling	4.55	3.69	4.18	3.50

The rankings are identical between counsellors and principals, but the rankings between real and ideal settings were considerably less similar. The highest ranked activity again by both groups, is meeting and consultation with parents. Parent education, however, would be given more emphasis than telephone interviews in an ideal setting. The emphasis on family counselling, which replaces school orientation programs in fourth place when ranked ideally, was also increased.

It appears therefore that counsellors and principals both see a need for more work with families, primarily of a consultative nature, and including more parent education and family counselling as well.

Degree of Influence

Counsellors and principals both indicated on a seven point scale their perceptions of the degree to which they and others in the school influence how counsellor time is divided between various activities. Table 12 shows the mean responses of each group.

Table 12

Perceptions of Amounts of Influence on Counsellor Activity By School Personnel

Respondent	Counsellor Mean	Principal Mean
Principal	3.163	2.696
Counsellors	2.021	2.444
Teachers	4.191	3.826
Consensus	4.804	4.436

Counsellors' and principals' perceptions were very similar regarding the influence by various school personnel. Their main responses indicated that counsellors and principals are the main determiners of how counsellor time is distributed, and that teachers and the staff as a whole exert considerably less influence. In contrast to the findings of Hassard & Costar (1977) principals were not perceived as the main determiners of counsellor functions in Edmonton schools, as counsellors were seen as equal or more important determiners of their own activities.

When the similarity between counsellors' and principals' responses to previously considered questions is considered, it would appear likely that major conflict in opinion about the distribution of counsellor time is infrequent. In most schools, principals, though influential, are likely to be supportive of counsellor choices regarding their time and activities rather than in opposition.

Differences between the two school systems in the percentage of time spent by counsellors in various activities might be seen as an estimate of the influence of supervisory personnel in how counsellor time is spent, as the two systems have established different policies regarding family counselling by school counsellors. If the

policies set by the directors of counselling services influence the distribution of counselling time, a greater percentage of time in family counselling should be seen in the Edmonton Separate School counsellors' responses. The differences, however, were minimal. Similar amounts of time were spent by counsellors in both systems in communication with parents (EPSB - 7.67%, ESSB - 9.63%) and in family counselling (EPSB - 7.3%, ESSB - 8.0% of time in family interaction). It would appear therefore, that the policies on family counselling set by the two school systems are not significantly influencing the ways counsellors distribute their time.

Barriers to Counsellor-Family Interaction

Counsellors and principals were asked if they have found that there are barriers to changing the amount of involvement between counsellor and family. On a seven point scale on which "1" represented major barriers and "7" represented no barriers, counsellors responded with a mean of 3.30, 74% of them indicating that they found some barriers by marking one of the first four numbers. Principals' responses were similar with 77% marking numbers from 1 to 4, resulting in a mean of 3.43. It is clear from this data that barriers are perceived which are limiting the amount of counsellor-family interaction in the schools, though these barriers are not generally perceived as "major".

The nature of the barriers is more complex. The following barriers were specified by the questionnaire - job accountability, time requirements, reticence of parents, lack of counsellor competence in working with families and the greater importance of other activities. Table 13 shows the means of the responses by counsellor and principals.

Responses by counsellors and principals were essentially similar as seen in Table 13. Principals view counsellor competence and the greater importance of other activities as somewhat more important barriers than counsellors do, but their perceptions of other barriers were

Table 13
The Perceived Importance of Specified Barriers
To Increased Counsellor-Family Interaction

Barriers	Counsellor	Principal
Job Accountability	4.18	4.57
Time Requirements	2.50	2.32
Reticence of Parents	2.83	2.72
Lack of Competence	5.57	4.81
Greater Importance of Other Activities	3.73	2.97

the same. The "importance of other activities" and "time requirements" may be considered to be interactive as barriers to increased counsellor-family interaction. It can be assumed that if working with families was considered to be of greater importance in the school counsellors' role, then time requirements would be less important as other functions would be given less time. However, as we have seen, both principals and counsellors have ranked individual personal counselling, and consultation with teachers as being of greater importance than interaction with parents, and principals included group counselling as more important as well. When demands on counsellor time are heavy, therefore, interaction with families is reduced.

Reticence by parents was considered to be essentially as important as the above barriers in preventing increased counsellor-family interaction. This perception was, in part supported by parent responses indicating their willingness to participate in various activities with counsellors. Although 87% were willing to engage in consultation with counsellors, only 46% to 65% were willing to participate in other specified activities and those parents who declined to respond to the survey may be still more reticent to work with counsellors.

Generally, lack of counsellor competence and job accountability were not seen as important barriers to increased family interaction. It can be concluded therefore that heavy demands on counsellor time coupled with the higher perceived value of other activities and the unwillingness of many parents to interact with counsellors are the primary barriers to increased counsellor-family interaction.

The Nature of the Interaction

As we have already seen, the nature of counsellor-family interaction within Edmonton School systems is primarily consultative as shown in the high proportion of time assigned to "meeting and consultation" by counsellors. It can be assumed as well that telephone interviews are primarily consultative in nature according to definitions of consulting as "a process of collecting data to increase the counsellor's knowledge of the child, and interpretation of the child to the parent in order to bring about limited remedial measures" (Faust 1968).

Combining these categories of family related activity, therefore it can be seen that 64% of counsellor-family interaction can be described as consultative in nature. The remaining 36% is largely spent in interaction of a formal educational nature as orientation programs and parent education consume 28% of time spent with families. Essentially therefore 92% of counsellor-family time is spent in basically cognitive, information-based activities, while only 8% of this time is spent in emotional, relationship-centered activities in an intensive family counselling relationship with the counsellor.

Counsellors were asked to indicate which theoretical orientations they used while interacting with families. Table 14 shows the percentage of responses applied to each category. As most respondents marked more than one category the sum of the percentages equals more than 100.

Table 14
Percentage of Counsellors Using
Specified Theoretical Orientations

Adler - Dreikurs	84.6%	Rational-emotive	11.5%
Transactional Anal.	21.2%	Reality Therapy	55.8%
Gestalt	13.5%	Parent effectiveness	55.8%
Behavioral	38.5%	Other	15.4%
Client-centered	46.2%	None	3.8%

The orientations used by most counsellors reflect the educational and consultative nature of counsellor-family interaction in the schools. The Adlerian-Dreikurs model was the one most frequently used by respondents followed by Reality Therapy and Parent Effectiveness Training all of which have a strong cognitive component. More therapeutic or self-exploratory and affective models such as Transactional Analysis, Client-centered therapy or Gestalt therapy were less frequently indicated, although 46% of respondents indicated that they used a client centered approach with certain cases.

General Attitudes Toward Counsellor-Family Interaction

Respondents were asked to indicate their level of agreement with a number of attitudinal statements related to counsellor-family interaction. Agreement was measured by a seven point scale on which "1" meant strongly agree and "7" meant strongly disagree. The following tables give a breakdown of how each group responded to these statements.

The greatest agreement was shown by counsellors with the statement that "schools need more counsellors to assist children with problems". Seventy-five percent of counsellors agreed with this; only eight percent disagreed. Only 55% of principals, however, expressed definite agreement with this statement.

Table 15

Levels of Agreement with Statements

About Counsellor-Family Interaction

School Counsellors should limit their activities to those which meet basic educational goals.

Numbers Marked	Means	1 & 2 Agree	3,4,5 Not Sure	6 & 7 Disagree
Counsellors	4.64	15.9%	40.9%	43.2%
Principals	4.66	20.5	40.9	38.6
Parents	5.08	17.0	27.6	55.3
Total Group	4.80	17.8	36.3	45.9

Schools need more counsellors to assist children with personal and educational problems.

Counsellors	2.17	75.0%	16.7%	8.3%
Principals	2.93	54.5	31.8	13.6
Total Group	3.08	57.1	20.1	22.7

Family needs should be dealt with in agencies other than schools.

Counsellors	3.70	32.6%	43.5%	23.9%
Principals	3.60	33.3	51.1	15.5
Total Group	3.72	32.1	47.0	20.9

Because counsellors often do not have enough time to work with all children who need help, they should function primarily to assist teachers to deal with the child's emotional needs.

Counsellors	3.16	40.8	48.9	10.2
Principals	3.02	48.9	42.5	8.5
Total Group	3.09	44.8	45.7	9.4

Counsellors should work more with families whenever the needs of the child can be more adequately met in that way.

	Means	Agree	Not Sure	Disagree
Counsellors	2.29	67.3%	24.5%	8.1%
Parents	3.25	55.4	16.9	22.7

The statement, "School counsellors should limit their activities to those which meet basic educational goals" stimulated many respondents to question the meaning of "basic educational goals". In spite of considerable discussion through the media in recent years about the"Back to Basics" movement in education, the comments and the responses, particularly by counsellors and principals reflected little consensus or acceptance of this statement with over 40% responding in the "not sure" range. Parental responses showed less uncertainty and stronger disagreement with over 55% marking 6 or 7 on the scale.

The above statement, together with the statement "Counsellors should function primarily to assist teachers to deal with the child's emotional needs" and "family needs should be dealt with in agencies other than schools" can be seen as basically de-emphasizing the value and appropriateness of counsellor-family interaction in the school setting. However, from this point of view, little consistency is seen in the responses. Generally, respondents agreed with or weren't sure that counsellors' primary function was to assist teachers. Almost half expressed uncertainty about whether community agencies were more appropriate places for meeting family needs than schools, with the responses of the remaining half slightly more in agreement than disagreement. However, there was more disagreement with the statement about limiting counselling activities to basic educational goals. It would appear, therefore, that though "basic educational goals"

may not be entirely acceptable as the criteria for limiting counsellor functions, there is fair agreement that family needs should be met in other agencies, and that a more important function of counsellors is to assist teachers. This is in agreement with previously reported results ranking consultation with teachers as generally more important than counsellor family interaction.

In contrast, the statement that "counsellors should work more with families whenever the needs of the child can be more adequately met in that way" is supportive of counsellor-family interaction in the schools. Response to this question was primarily positive by both counsellors and parents, although 28% of parents disagreed. Only 8% of counsellors disagreed with this statement. Judgement as to whether the needs of the child can be more adequately met through work with families, therefore, appears to be the important criterion for many counsellors.

In summary, there was relatively little consensus in attitudes of respondents regarding counsellor interaction with families in schools as expressed in these statements. Coniderable tentativeness was indicated in most reponses and the means for most statements were in the middle of the scale. The only strong agreement was indicated by a mean of 2.167 in counsellor responses to the need for more counsellors and a mean of 2.28 in counsellors' responses to the statement that counsellors should work more with families if the perceived needs of the child so indicated.

Other Comments

Respondents from all groups accepted the invitation to contribute further comments about counsellor family interaction. Many of the comments corresponded with the areas of the questionnaire and confirmed these topics as areas of concern and interest.

The incidence of family related problems and the need for special assistance for families was the content of many comments especially those of counsellors and principals.

90% of the children I work with have a family problem.

(EPSB Counsellor)

In our small inner-city school we have more than our share of families with problems. We need more people in the school counsellor-trained to help or listen to people, e.g. Alanon, Parents Anonymous (child beaters) wives who have survived beatings, etc. At present I deal with and try to help people when the counsellor or nurse isn't here.

(EPSB Principal)

Have mixed feelings. Schools have early and direct knowledge of family problems and are in a position to intervene and assist. But we are probably defining new roles for school counsellors.

(EPSB Teacher & Parent)

Would like to see more counselling for children with personal, emotional and social problems, as the quality of the child's school work is affected by them. More counselling, also, for parents on how to handle these problems. The teachers seem indifferent to the child's emotional problems and ironically a lot of these have developed at school.

(ESSB Parent)

Many respondents supported the importance of counsellors working with personal and emotional problems, but questioned family "therapy" as a role for school counsellors.

The school is not equipped to deal with the social problems of society. Family problems are increasing in number. The school should do as much as possible --but remember that the major functions of the school is education through instruction. Time and resources do not allow any other approaches.

(EPSB Principal)

I question whether therapy with families is the role of a school counsellor.

(ESSB Counsellor)

Many comments confirmed that respondents perceived major problems in counsellors working with families. These included difficulties in arranging time for meeting, heavy counsellor loads, and the competence or image of counsellors.

> If counsellors are to work more with families, their working hours are either going to have to shift or become very flexible. Most parents work and are unavailable until after normal working hours. This means late afternoon or evening sessions. Anything more than one parenting session and one family counselling session would be asking a lot. If counselling with the child is to be taken on, then it makes sense to try to involve as many of the factors affecting the child. In many cases individual counselling is a big waste of time.
>
> (EPSB Counsellor)

> Working in more than one school; no time, no energy!
>
> (EPSB Counsellor)

> In order for school counselling to be beneficial he/she must have enough time in a school to test the child and then to work with the child and his family until results are evident. Counsellors who are handling too many schools are spread too thinly and can't possibly do an effective job with the children.
>
> (EPSB Parent)

> In the past five years I have worked with 3 different counsellors in 2 different schools. I have found one out of three outstanding with respect to meeting our needs. The other two were plagued with so many personal problems they were totally ineffectual.
>
> (EPSB Principal)

> As for school counsellors, I've never met or heard of one at the school.
>
> (EPSB Parent)

> A teacher does not always make a good counsellor. Even some of the people who go in for counselling jobs, e.g. courses at Grant McEwan should not be let into the program without more investigation into how stable they are in their own lives. It takes a special person to be a school counsellor.
>
> (EPSB Parent)

Finally many counsellors wrote about compromise, their felt inability to facilitate positive changes in many cases, and the delicate negotiation required with teachers and administrators to define their role in the school. Some conveyed a definite sense of discouragement.

> Counselling can be effective if you have good cooperation from your teachers and the administrators. Often the administrator has been the obstacle to the work of a counsellor. A counsellor has to sell himself to teachers as well as the parents. It's a hard job because you have to answer to so many people and your work load is almost impossible. Many good counsellors abandon the job because of this.
>
> (ESSB Counsellor)

> Counsellors are still viewed as a threat to some teachers, children and especially parents. I would like to see exposure of programs and work of counsellors via the media.
>
> (EPSB Counsellor)

> It is often difficult to produce any lasting changes in isolation. We can make significant gains in our own little aquarium and have them wiped out when the little fish enters the big pond and has to deal with family, peers, etc.
>
> (EPSB Counsellor)

> I will probably be leaving counselling soon. I find that many of the routes I follow are based more on a compromise than on what I would prefer to do.
>
> (EPSB Counsellor)

One parent expressed, in meaningful though unsophisticated words, considerable hope for the future and optimism about the school.

> Wonderful--no comment. But I'm in the school only 12 years--not good for my whole life. I'm only hope teacher to teach my kid in the future become good kid in the world. Please thank you.
>
> (EPSB Parent)

Discussion and Summary

Paramount among the goals set out for this study was to learn whether school counsellors, principals and parents perceived counsellor-family interaction to be of value in comparison with other functions typically carried out by school counsellors. Is working with families perceived to be an important approach to assisting many children and meeting educational goals as much of the literature would indicate? A number of measures of the value placed on counsellor function have been described previously. These are (1) the percentage of time spent by counsellors with families, (2) rank ordering of the importance of counsellors' work with parents in comparison with other counsellor functions, and (3) the percentage of time counsellors would choose to spend with families in an ideal situation.

We have seen that in the present school systems, counsellors are spending approximately 9% of their time in interaction with families, although if regular teaching assignments are removed from the calculations, it can be said that counsellors are spending almost 10% of counselling time in family work. In comparison, individual and group conselling consume approximately 30% of the counsellor's time and consulting with teachers over 10% of their time. The ranking data indicating how important respondents perceive various counsellor functions to be similarly places individual personal counselling and consultation with teachers in positions of greater importance than working with families.

A number of factors indicate, however, that the value of counsellor-family interaction may be slightly higher than the above figures indicate. Counsellors have indicated that they would spend about 35% of their time in interaction with families. This is triple the amount of time being spent presently. Respondents have generally indicated that there are barriers which limit counsellor-family interaction. Particularly relevant are the findings

confirming that many parents are reticent to work with school counsellors and will not or cannot arrange meeting times. The finding that individual personal counselling consumes the highest percentage of counsellor time in elementary and junior high schools also gives support to the value of counsellor-family interaction. It is probably fair to say that interaction with families of students is more relevant to the issues and problems involved in individual personal counselling than it is to any of the other functions specified such as affective education or vocational guidance.

The results of this study, therefore, support the conclusion that working with families has considerable perceived value for all respondents as an important approach to meeting student needs and educational goals, although a number of barriers exist that are keeping the amount of time spent in these activities at less than the ideal amount.

We must also conclude that counsellor-family interaction has value for all groups surveyed primarily as a consultative and educational process in keeping with the accepted functions of the school in society. While it may be accepted that children's problems are often related to dysfunctional family interaction patterns, the school is seen by few to be the appropriate setting for intensive family counselling. Less than 1% of counsellor time is spent in family counselling in Edmonton schools.

Although principals and counsellors perceived a slight increase in family counselling to be consistent with an ideal situation, a larger need for increased parent education programs was indicated. Undoubtedly this would assume a higher priority than family counselling if changes in the amount of counsellor-family interaction were to take place.

Barriers to these changes remain complex. Respondents have indicated that a higher value on individual personal counselling and teacher consultation and heavy demands on counsellor time are important factors limiting the amount

of counsellor-family interaction ocurring in the schools. Of equal importance is the attitude of parents towards interaction with the school counsellor. Although many parents indicated they were willing to engage in various forms of interaction with counsellors, many were not. Numerous parents also indicated by their comments and responses that they were unaware that there were counsellors in the schools, lacking information regarding the training and capabilities of counselling staff and confused regarding the role of the counsellor and other school specialists. Added to this, the difficulties expressed by counsellors in scheduling meetings when both parents are employed make increased counsellor-family interaction problematic.

These conclusions have leaned heavily on the quantity of the interaction between counsellors and families. A remaining factor, that of the quality of the interaction, must be considered. On one hand the quality of family work may have an impact on the barriers which limit counsellor family interaction. It is self evident that poor quality interaction between counsellors and families may contribute greatly to the barriers to increased family emphasis in the schools in the form of a lowered image of the school counsellor and his effectiveness, and add to parental reluctance to work with school counsellors. On the positive side, the quality of counsellor family interaction may contribute to the positive image of the counsellor as well as leading to greater effectiveness in meeting student needs. These results would inevitably reduce some of the barriers which we have discussed.

The quality of the interaction, on the other hand, may also blur the distinctions between the forms of the interaction with families. As stated earlier in this paper, the differences between consulting and counselling are not clearly defined. When the giving and receiving of information stimulates self-exploratory processes and accompanying emotional reactions leading to positive change,

and when counsellors remain involved with and supportive of parents or families over the period of time when this change is occurring, as is advocated by many writers supporting the consultative model, the interaction becomes more closely related to a counselling model. When parent education groups are injected with a quality of relationship and interaction more closely related to group counselling, the formal pedagogical aspect of the group process may become de-emphasized as other forms of learning become important. The educational value of such experiences cannot be disregarded but a more complete and higher quality learning may be in process.

Chapter V

Moving Toward the Ideal

The broader intent of this study has been to help to discover more effective ways by which the school and school counsellors in particular can help children overcome the various obstacles which interfere with learning. This chapter looks at the place of the present study in this broader context, and discusses its implications and limitations.

As in all research, this study rests upon certain basic assumptions. One of these is the value of family life for the individual, and in this case particularly for the child. It rests on the belief that the child has basic needs which must be met before he or she can begin to cope with the demands of education. For many or most children these needs are met primarily within the family. For other children the demands of the school and developmental changes may exacerbate their reactions to family based conflicts resulting in disturbed behaviour patterns in the school and at home. For many the resulting interference with learning achievement ranges from moderate to severe.

We have said that the counselling function in the school is one of providing additional assistance for children with these types of problems. The counsellor who finds, however, that many children are suffering from problems based at home is faced with a dilemma in his quest to find the most effective ways of helping the child. Making work with families a paramount part of the counsellors' role is stretching the traditional role definition of school guidance and counselling to a considerable degree. In addition, counsellors must ascertain whether placing increased emphasis on work with families or parents is a more effective

approach to helping many students. This study was designed as a partial contribution to resolving this problem.

Finding answers to this question through research is difficult because of the number and complexity of the variables involved many of which cannot be precisely measured. In addition controlled experimental research requires consideration of the moral necessity for providing the best services possible for all children, not only those included in an experimental group. Single case studies are useful contributions to our knowledge, but cannot always provide the generalizations needed. Moreover, many more of such studies carried out in school settings are needed before relevant conclusions can be generated.

This study relies on the intuitive sense and reasoning of many people as a way of supporting or disputing the effectiveness of counsellor-family interaction. The respondents in this survey, counsellors, principals and parents, are people who, through the nature of their work and the emotional investment in the problems of the children involved, can be assumed to hold opinions on approaches to solving some of the problems. Counsellors' views are held to be of particular importance due to the nature of their work and their training. This study has shown that almost all counsellors (88%) surveyed see value in increased work with families. (Of 12% of counsellors not responding with an ideal percentage higher than a real percentage, 8% did not complete both items and 4% (N = 2) rated both items equally) I believe that consensus to this degree by thinking and concerned professionals can be taken as valid support for the effectiveness of such an approach.

Certain limitations in the study, however, can be identified. The parent questionnaire did not explore the contact between parents and the schools as fully as necessary to provide a clear picture of how this relationship may influence counsellor-family interaction. It could not be determined from this research whether many parents were

unwilling to participate in interaction with counsellors, or were generally indifferent feeling no need for counselling services. A more complete assessment of parent awareness of counselling services, for example, would require an investigation of what services are available in each school and the comparison of this information with data on what services parents are aware of. Further research to more thoroughly evaluate parents' knowledge of the school counsellor role and parental attitudes toward these services is needed. A further limitation on the conclusions related to parental responses, that of the bias incorporated in a mediocre response rate, has been described previously.

It is also important when considering the conclusions of this study to keep in mind the high variability associated with many questions. Response distribution for many topics were almost rectangular or occasionally bimodal showing almost as many negative or undecided answers as positive responses especially in areas such as the determination of barriers to increased counsellor-family interaction. The descriptive statistics used in reporting the results, therefore, must be considered in this context.

Conclusions related to the importance and nature of barriers to increased counsellor-family interaction are tentative and require further study. The resulting data combined with the many comments which focused on this area, however, provide confirmation and some further insight into problems which exist in working with families and provide a basis for some recommendations designed to stimulate the movement toward the ideal of increased interaction with families.

Considering the heavy demand on counsellor time which is reported, and a small liklihood that counsellor-pupil ratios will be greatly reduced in the near future, it is evident that moving towards increasing the amount of work with families will require a changing of priorities. Ways

of doing so must be considered in light of comments made by some counsellors describing the need for compromises and the feelings of discouragement engendered. If such feelings are widespread, (and this study did not investigate this area) then changing priorities may in fact be a function of reducing the barriers which limit increased work with families. It seems logical at any rate that reducing any existing barriers would, in itself contribute to moving the time spent with families closer to the ideal.

Reticence by parents to participate in interaction with counsellors is the second important barrier which was perceived by counsellors and principals and which must be reduced before any major increase in counsellor-family interaction can take place. As a beginning, it would seem important for many counsellors to become more visible to parents generally. The fact that many parents are unaware that there are counsellors in the elementary schools and have little understanding of their roles and their professional training must be a detriment to increased counsellor-family work. Although it may be difficult or impossible to ensure that all school counsellors have the personal stability and professional qualities to eliminate the negative image of school counsellors held by some parents, higher visibility by all counsellors should help considerably. More effort should be made to inform parents about the counsellors' abilities, interests and concerns. Use of the media, as suggested by one respondent, could be one valuable way to improve the public image of school counselling. Parents must be informed that most counsellors have graduate level training including work in psychology, and are prepared to help them solve problems with their children through the provision of information related to parenting and problem-solving techniques.

It has been said that anxiety about being negatively judged is a contributing factor to parent reticence when a child is experiencing difficulties in the school. Professional competence, including validation of the parents as persons who love their child and are doing their best combined with

an open and non-judgmental attitude on the part of the counsellor and communicated to the parent is likely to be the best offense against this fear. As one family consultant in a British Columbia school system who has been spending approximately 40% of his time working with families for several years stated, "There is no magic answer for reaching uncooperative parents, but the belief that all parents truly care makes a lot of difference" (Hembling, Note 4).

Greater flexibility in working hours is needed for those counsellors interested in working more with families or parents. If counsellors are to be encouraged to meet with parents outside of their normal working hours, they should be compensated by flexible hours during the school day. The basic assumption that working parents are unavailable during the day, however, needs to be challenged as well. Parents are frequently able to arrange time during the day for appointments with other professionals. It is possible that, if parents were convinced of the value of meeting with the school counsellor, more of them would find ways of arranging the necessary time.

The appropriateness of increased work with families in schools was an area incompletely dealt with in this research, but it did receive many comments nonetheless. Moreover, the necessity of accounting to superiors, though not perceived as a major barrier by respondents is bound to have an important impact on how counsellors make choices about their time allocations. Increasing the time spent working with families must be acceptable to the school systems and the general public. The alternative, that of referring families to agencies outside the school when family problems come to the attention of the school staff, is strongly supported by many. Referral, however, does not always or even often result in families following through and engaging in further counselling. Moreover, to involve greater numbers of professionals is not necessarily a more

effective answer, and the child's needs may be more adequately met through working within the system where the problems have become evident. If the school counsellor is interested and parents are willing to work with the professional already involved, it would seem to be a more reasonable solution in many cases.

Further research and more successful work with families would be instrumental in opening the doors to a renegotiation of counsellor roles to allow a more ideal percentage of time to be spent working with families. If interaction between counsellors and families is shown to be educationally desirable, every effort should be made to make the necessary changes in role definition and administrative policy. It is worth noting that not only may working with families be more effective than individual personal counselling, but more time efficient and preventive as well, as family work has the potential for helping two or three children per family.

In spite of the problems and the barriers described, there is some evidence that counsellor-family interaction is increasing. As stated earlier, counsellors in 1971 were reported to be spending half an hour per week with parents in Edmonton Separate Schools. Today counsellors in the same school system typically spend 2½ hours per week in interaction with families. Parent education groups have increased dramatically, both within the schools and in other settings. The session on family counselling held as part of the Alberta Guidance Council Conference during the past year drew an unexpectedly large turnout. In addition some of the ideas from family systems theory are starting to reach the popular press as seen by a recent women's magazine publication of an article called "The New Family Therapy" (Marchand 1980). Increasing awarenss of the factors in family life which influence children's achievement is bound to have an effect on parental reaction to consultation and counselling.

The prognosis for moving in the direction of increased interaction with families, therefore, appears to be good. Furthermore, if the effects of increased interaction prove to be positive, the increases are likely to continue. Counsellors' ideal of spending 35% of their time working with families may in time and with a concerted effort, become a reality.

It would be, of course, unrealistic to suggest that all family related school problems will be solved by such movement toward the perceived ideal as found in this study. But to begin to help more children is sufficiently worthwhile to justify the effort required. As the United Nations Declaration of the Rights of the Child states, "Mankind owes to the child the best it has to give". Finding ways to help more children come to the school freed from the frustrations and tensions derived from unmet personal needs so that they can fully participate in the processes of learning about their world is one way of providing the best of counselling services.

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Questionnaire for School Counselors

Please indicate by check mark or by filling in the blank answers which best describe your school placement and your professional training.

1. Counselor training

Bachelor's degree ___ Graduate Diploma ___ Master's degree ___ Doctoral degree ___ Other (please specify) _____

2. Number of years of counseling experience _____

3. Number of schools in which you work _____

4. Total number of students in these schools (approximate to nearest ten) _____

5. Grades with which you work.

Kg. ___ 1-3 ___ 4-6 ___ 7-8 ___ 10-12 ___.

6. In the following question, indicate your response on the seven point scale by circling the appropriate number from 1 to 7. Circle 8 if you do not know or the question does not apply to you.

In your school(s) what members of staff typically influence how counselor time is distributed between various kinds of activities?

6-1 Principal

Always influential 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Never influential 8

6-2 Counselor(s)

Always influential 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Never influential 8

6-3 Teachers

Always influential 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Never influential 8

6-4 Worked out by consensus of staff members

Always influential 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Never influential 8

6-5 Other (please specify) _____

Always influential 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Never influential 8

7. During an average week, what percentage of your time is spent on the following activities:

7-1	Individual personal counseling	___
7-2	Group counseling	___
7-3	Vocational guidance	___
7-4	Testing	___
7-5	Teaching regular or special classes	___
7-6	Consultation with teachers	___
7-7	Communication with parents	___
7-8	Affective education programs	___
7-9	Administrative duties	___
7-10	Program development	___
7-11	Other (please specify) _____	___
		100%

8. Rank these activities from 1 to 11 to indicate which you see as most important. Place 1 beside the most important and 11 beside the least important.

8-1	Individual personal counseling	___
8-2	Group counseling	___
8-3	Vocational guidance	___
8-4	Testing	___
8-5	Teaching regular or special classes	___
8-6	Consultation with teachers	___
8-7	Communication with parents	___
8-8	Affective education programs	___
8-9	Administrative duties	___
8-10	Program development	___
8-11	Other (please specify) _____	___

9. Of the time spent in communication with parents or families of students, what percentage of time is spent in the following activities?

9-1	Parent orientation to school and programs	___
9-2	Interviews or reporting by telephone	___
9-3	Meeting and consultation with parents	___
9-4	Parent education groups	___
9-5	Intensive or ongoing family counseling	___
9-6	Other (please specify) _____	___
		100%

10. Rank these activities from 1 to 6 to indicate which you see as most important within the present school system. Place 1 beside the most important and 6 beside the least important.

10-1	Parent orientation to school and programs	___
10-2	Interview or reporting by telephone	___
10-3	Meeting and consultation with parents	___
10-4	Parent education groups	___
10-5	Intensive or ongoing family counseling	___
10-6	Other (please specify) _____	___

11. 12. On the following questions, indicate your opinion on the seven point scale by circling the appropriate number from 1 to 7. Circle number 8 if you do not know or the question does not apply to you.

11. Do you find there are barriers to changing the amount of involvement between counselor and family?

Major barriers 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 No barriers 8

12. If you have responded by circling 7 or 8 to the last question, skip to question #14. If not please respond to the following.

You have indicated above that you perceive barriers to changing the amount of involvement between counselors and families. How do you see the significance of the following.

12-1 Job accountability as a barrier

Major barrier 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 No barrier 8

12-2 Time requirements

Major barrier 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 No barrier 8

12-3 Reticence of parents to become involved

Major barrier 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 No barrier 8

12-4 Lack of confidence in working with families

Major barrier 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 No barrier 8

12-5 Lack of knowledge of family counselling theory or techniques

Major barrier 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 No barrier 8

12-6 Greater importance of other activities

Major barrier 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 No barrier 8

12-7 Other (please specify) _____

Major barrier 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 No barrier 8

13. Please rank in order of importance those items marked 1 or 2 above as important barriers. Place 1 beside the most important.

13-1 Job accountability ___
13-2 Time requirements ___
13-3 Reticence of parents ___
13-4 Lack of confidence in working with families ___
13-5 Lack of knowledge of family counseling techniques ___
13-6 Greater importance of other activities ___
13-7 Other (as above) ___

14. If any barriers which exist were removed, and you were visualizing an ideal situation, what activities would you rank as most important in working with families? Place 1 beside the most important of the following activities and 6 beside the least important.

14-1 Parent orientation to school and programs ___
14-2 Interview or reporting by telephone ___
14-3 Meeting and consultation with parents ___
14-4 Parent education groups ___
14-5 Intensive or ongoing family counseling ___
14-6 Other (please specify) ___

_____ ---

15. What percentage of your time in an average week would you choose to spend working with families in such an ideal situation? ___

16. What percentage of the time chosen above (question #15) to work with families would you spend ideally in the following activities?

16-1 Parent orientation to school and programs ___
16-2 Interview or reporting by telephone ___
16-3 Meeting and consultation with parents ___
16-4 Parent education groups ___
16-5 Intensive or ongoing family counseling ___
16-6 Other (please specify) ___

_____ ___

17. In working with families, what is your theoretical orientation? Please check those which apply.

Adler-Dreikurs	___	Rational-emotive	___
Transactional Analysis	___	Reality therapy	___
Gestalt Therapy	___	Parent effectiveness	___
Behavioural	___	Other	___
Client-centered	___	None	___

18. How many times per year would you typically refer parents or families to other agencies for counseling or therapy? ___

19. - 23. Which of the following statements agree with your beliefs concerning the functions of school counselors.

Circle the number on the 7 point scale which indicates your level of agreement with the statement. Circle 8 if you do not know or if the statement does not apply.

19. School counselors should limit their activities to those which meet basic educational goals.

Strongly agree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Strongly disagree 8

20. Counselors should work more with families whenever the needs of the child can be more adequately met in that way.

Strongly agree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Strongly disagree 8

21. Schools need more counselors to assist children with problems.

Strongly agree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Strongly disagree 8

22. Family needs should be dealt with in agencies other than schools.

Strongly agree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Strongly disagree 8

23. Because counselors often do not have enough time to work with all children who need help, they should function primarily to assist teachers to deal with the child's emotional needs.

Strongly agree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Strongly disagree 8

Please use this space for any additional comments.

Questionnaire for Principals

Please indicate by check mark or by filling in the blank the answer(s) which best describe your school situation.

1. School classification: Elementary ___ Jr. Secondary ___ Senior Sec. ___

2. Total number of students (to nearest ten) _____

3. Number of school counselors (or portion of counselor time) _____

4.-8. In the following questions, indicate your opinion on the 7 point scale by circling the appropriate number from 1 to 7. Circle 8 if you do not know or the question does not apply to you.

In your school what members of staff typically influence how counselor time is divided between various activities?

4. Principal

Always influential 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Never influential 8

5. Counselor(s)

Always influential 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Never influential 8

6. Teachers

Always influential 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Never influential 8

7. Worked out by consensus of staff members

Always influential 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Never influential 8

8. Other (please specify)

_____

Always influential 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Never influential 8

9. The following are activities often performed by school counselors. Rank these activities from 1 to 11 to indicate which you see as most important. Place 1 beside the most important and 11 beside the least important.

9-1	Individual personal counseling	___
9-2	Group counseling	___
9-3	Vocational guidance	___
9-4	Testing	___
9-5	Teaching regular or special classes	___
9-6	Consultation with teachers	___
9-7	Communication with parents	___
9-8	Affective education programs	___
9-9	Administrative duties	___
9-10	Program development	___
9-11	Other (please specify) _____	___

10. The following are ways school counselors often work with families of students. Rank them from 1 to 6 to indicate which you see as most important.

10-1	Parent orientation to school and programs	___
10-2	Interview or reporting by telephone	___
10-3	Meeting and consultation with parents	___
10-4	Parent education groups	___
10-5	Intensive or ongoing family counseling	___
10-6	Other (please specify) _____	___

11.-18. On the following questions, indicate your opinion on the 7 point scale by circling the appropriate number from 1 to 7. Circle 8 if you do not know or the question does not apply.

11. Do you think there are barriers to changing the amount of involvement between counselor and family?

Major barrier 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 No barrier 8

12.-18. If you have indicated above that there are barriers to changing the amount of involvement between counselors and families, how do you perceive the significance of the following.

If you have responded by circling 7 or 8 on question #11 above skip to question #19. If not please respond.

12. Job accountability as a barrier

Major barrier 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 No barrier 8

13. Time requirements

Major barrier 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 No barrier 8

14. Reticence of parents to become involved

Major barrier 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 No barrier 8

15. Lack of counselor competence in working with families

Major barrier 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 No barrier 8

16. Greater importance of other activities

Major barrier 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 No barrier 8

17. Other (please specify) _____

Major barrier 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 No barrier 8

18. Please rank in order of importance those items marked 1 or 2 above as important barriers. Place 1 beside the most important.

18-1	Job accountability	___
18-2	Time requirements	___
18-3	Reticence of parents	___
18-4	Counselor competence	___
18-5	Greater importance of other activities	___
18-6	Other (as above)	___

19. If any barriers which exist were removed, and you were visualizing an ideal situation, what activities would you rank as most important for school counselors working with families. Place 1 beside the most important.

19-1	Parent orientation to school and programs	___
19-2	Interview or reporting by telephone	___
19-3	Meeting and consultation with parents	___
19-4	Parent education groups	___
19-5	Intensive or ongoing family counseling	___
19-6	Other (please specify) _____	___

Which of the following statements agree with your beliefs concerning the functions of school counselors?

Circle the number on the 7 point scale to indicate your level of agreement with the statement. Circle 8 if you do not know or if the statement does not apply.

20. School counselors should limit their activities to those which meet basic educational goals.

Strongly agree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Strongly disagree 8

21. Schools need more counselors to assist children with personal and educational problems.

Strongly agree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Strongly disagree 8

22. Family needs should be dealt with in agencies other than schools.

Strongly agree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Strongly disagree 8

23. Because counselors often do not have enough time to work with all children who need help, they should function primarily to assist teachers to deal with the child's emotional needs.

Strongly agree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Strongly disagree 8

Please use this space for any additional comments.

Questionnaire for Parents

Please indicate by check mark or by filling in the blanks the following information as it applies to you or to your family.

1. Parent responding: Mother___ Father___ Guardian___
2. Age of respondent: ___
3. Number of children: ___
4. Occupation of head of household: _____
5. Two parent family: ___ Single parent family: ___
6. Number of children attending school at the following levels:
   Kindergarten ___ 1 - 3 ___ 4 - 6 ___ 7 - 9 ___ 10 - 12 ___
7. How many times during the past year have you been in your children's schools? ___
8. How many meetings have you held with teachers? ___
9. How many times have you met with school counselors? ___
10. Have you ever attended a parent education group? Yes___ No___
11. Have you ever been referred to family counselling by school counselors or by community agencies? Yes___ No___
12. Which of the following services are available to you from school counselors. Check those you are aware of.
    - 12-1 Orientation to school and programs ___
    - 12-2 Interviews or reporting by telephone ___
    - 12-3 Meetings or consultation when needed ___
    - 12-4 Parent Education groups ___
    - 12-5 Family counseling ___
    - 12-6 Other (please specify) _____ ___
13. In which of these activities would you participate if invited or requested to do so by school counselors?
    - 13-1 Orientation to school and programs ___
    - 13-2 Interview or reporting by telephone ___
    - 13-3 Meetings or consultation about your child ___
    - 13-4 Parent education group ___
    - 13-5 Family counseling ___
    - 13-6 Other (please specify) _____ ___
14. Which of these services would you like to see made available more often by school counselors? Please indicate by check mark.
    - 14-1 Orientation to school or programs ___
    - 14-2 Interview or reporting by telephone ___
    - 14-3 Meetings or consultation about your child ___
    - 14-4 Parent education groups ___
    - 14-5 Family counseling ___
    - 14-6 Other (please specify) _____ ___
15. The following are activities commonly performed by school counselors. Rank them in the order of their importance to you and your child(ren). Place the number 1 beside the most important and the number 11 beside the least important.
    - 15-1 Individual personal counseling ___
    - 15-2 Group counseling programs to develop self-concept, communication skill, etc. ___
    - 15-3 Vocational guidance and planning ___
    - 15-4 Testing (intellectual assessment or detection of learning problems) ___
    - 15-5 Teaching regular or special classes ___
    - 15-6 Consultation with teachers ___
    - 15-7 Communication with parents ___
    - 15-8 Administrative duties ___
    - 15-9 Affective education programs ___
    - 15-10 Program development ___
    - 15-11 Other (please specify) _____ ___
16. - 26: Which of the following statements agree with your beliefs about schools and school counselors?

    Circle the number on the 7 point scale to indicate your level of agreement with the statement. Circle 8 if you do not know or if the statement does not apply to you.

16. The schools provide accurate and up-to-date information on my child(ren)'s activities and progress.

    Strongly Agree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Strongly Disagree 8

17. I feel free to go to the school or talk to the teachers of my child(ren) whenever there is a need.

Strongly Agree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Strongly Disagree 8

18. I am satisfied with the amount of contact I have with the school.

Strongly agree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Strongly Disagree 8

19. I am satisfied with the amount of contact I have with school counselors.

Strongly Agree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Strongly Disagree 8

20. The counselors are important in the school.

Strongly Agree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Strongly Disagree 8

21. Counselors should work more with families whenever the needs of the child can be more adequately met in that way.

Strongly Agree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Strongly Disagree 8

22. School counselors should limit their activities to those which meet basic educational goals.

Strongly Agree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Strongly Disagree 8

23. The role of school counselors is vocational guidance.

Strongly Agree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Strongly Disagree 8

24. Tax dollars are more effectively spent on more teachers per school instead of counselors.

Strongly Agree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Strongly Disagree 8

25. Family needs should be dealt with in agencies other than schools.

Strongly Agree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Strongly Disagree 8

26. Schools need more good counselors to assist children with personal and emotional problems.

Strongly Agree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Strongly Disagree 8

27. Other comments: _____

_____

Please use this space for any additional comments.

Appendix D

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATIONAL PSYCHOLOGY
FACULTY OF EDUCATION
THE UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA

January 8, 1980

Dear School Counselor,

The family and the school are undoubtedly two of the most important factors affecting students today as the stresses of the changing world grow more intense. As we strive to assist these children to develop healthy and satisfying lives, our understanding of the relationship between these two institutions grows more important.

As a graduate student in the Department of Educational Psychology at the University of Alberta, I am attempting to study the relationship between the family and the school and the role counselors play in this relationship. I hope to learn whether there is a need for changes in certain aspects of this relationship and how this change may be facilitated.

Your assistance is vitally important to the success of this study and will be greatly appreciated. Will you take a few minutes and fill in the enclosed questionnaire? All responses will remain anonymous and the questionnaire should take no more than fifteen to twenty minutes of your time. A stamped, addressed envelope is enclosed for your reply.

Results of this study will be made available to the school system for which you work and to interested participants.

Thank you very much for your cooperation.

Yours truly,

Joan Branigan

W. Hague

W. Hague
Associate Professor

6-102 EDUCATION NORTH, EDMONTON, ALBERTA, CANADA • T6G 2G5 • TELEPHONE (403) 432-5245

Appendix E

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATIONAL PSYCHOLOGY
FACULTY OF EDUCATION
THE UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA

January 8, 1980

Dear School Principal,

The family and the school are undoubtedly two of the most important factors affecting students today as the stresses of the changing world grow more intense. As we strive to assist these children to develop healthy and satisfying lives, our understanding of the relationship between these two institutions grows more important.

As a graduate student in the Department of Educational Psychology at the University of Alberta, I am attempting to study the relationship between the family and the school and the role school counselors play in this relationship. I hope to learn whether there is a need for changes in certain aspects of counselor involvement with families and how these changes might be facilitated.

Your assistance is vitally important to the success of this study and will be greatly appreciated. Will you take a few minutes and fill in the enclosed questionnaire? All responses will remain anonymous and the questionnaire should take no more than fifteen to twenty minutes of your time. A stamped, addressed envelope is enclosed for your reply.

Results of this study will be made available to the school system for which you work and to interested participants.

Thank you very much for your cooperation.

Yours truly,

Joan Branigan

W. Hague,
Associate Professor

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Appendix F

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATIONAL PSYCHOLOGY
FACULTY OF EDUCATION
THE UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA

January 8, 1980

Dear Parent,

The family and the school are undoubtedly two of the most important factors affecting our children today as the stresses of the changing world grow more intense. As we strive to assist our children to develop healthy and satisfying lives, our understanding of the relationship between these two institutions grows more important.

As a graduate student in the Department of Educational Psychology at the University of Alberta, I am attempting to study the relationship between the family and the school. I hope to learn whether there is a need for changes in certain aspects of this relationship, and what role school counselors may have in this process.

Your assistance is vitally important to the success of this study and will be greatly appreciated. Will you take a few minutes and fill in the enclosed questionnaire? All responses will remain anonymous and the questionnaire should take no more than ten to fifteen minutes of your time. A stamped addressed envelope is enclosed for your reply.

Results of this study will be made available to the school system for the schools which your children attend and to interested participants.

Thank you very much for your cooperation.

Yours truly,

Joan Branigan

W. Hague

W. Hague
Associate Professor,

6-102 EDUCATION NORTH, EDMONTON, ALBERTA, CANADA • T6G 2G5 • TELEPHONE (403) 432-5245

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATIONAL PSYCHOLOGY
FACULTY OF EDUCATION
THE UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA

301 Michener Park,
Edmonton, Alberta
T6H 4M5
March 6, 1980

Dear Parent or Educator,

A few weeks ago you received a questionnaire about your views on family - school relationships. You may have put it aside until a few free minutes could be found in your busy schedule.

If you could take that few minutes right now to fill in the questionnaire and put it in the stamped, addressed envelope, your efforts would be greatly appreciated. You will have one less small job waiting to be done, and your response will have added appreciably to the results of our research.

If the questionnaire or envelope has been lost, please contact me at 435 - 0470 and I will be happy to send you another copy.

Thank you very much for your cooperation.

Yours truly,

Wm. Hague,
Associate Professor

Joan Branigan

6-102 EDUCATION NORTH, EDMONTON, ALBERTA, CANADA • T6G 2G5 • TELEPHONE (403) 432-5245